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EXPLORING RELIGION WITH EIGHT YEAR OLDS

EXPLORING RELIGION WITH EIGHT YEAR OLDS

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

By

HELEN FIRMAN SWEET

and

SOPHIA LYON FAHS

Illustrations by

DOROTHY HAREWOOD SMEDLEY

NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

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First Printing

PRINTED IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO THE CHILDREN

who speak so frankly and eagerly
in the pages which are to follow
this book is lovingly dedicated.

"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."
John 8:32.

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INTRODUCTION

This book is the record of an experiment with the democratic method and with a life-experience approach in the religious education of children. Much has been written on the theory of this newer approach to religious education. Several records of notable experiments with this type of education in the day-school experience of children are available, but there are very few records of what has actually happened when a teacher and a group have worked out a program of religious education on this basis. Progress will be made as records of this type are multiplied, not for other teachers to copy but to bring an understanding of difficulties and an insight into the possibilities in this approach and also to stimulate experiments by other teachers.

The book consists for the most part of the actual diary of Mrs. Helen Firman Sweet, the teacher of a third-grade class in the Union School of Religion for the year 1927-28.

By jotting down comments by the children as these were made and by faithfully writing the record each Sunday afternoon while the events of the morning were still fresh in her mind, the teacher sought to keep a full and unbiased record, as concrete and true to the real experience as it was possible to write. The diary is presented in its entirety, without blue-penciling the teacher's errors in judgment, without eliminating the commonplace Sundays from the record, and with only such editorial revision as seemed essential in order to make the record clear and readable—all in the belief that a true picture of the experience will prove of genuine value. Material not originally in the teacher's diary giving details of certain of the services of worship in the school has been added in order that the class discussions described in the record may have meaning for the reader. Comments and queries have been introduced at the close of each Sunday's record as a challenge to further inquiry.

Five additional chapters comprise the second part of the book. These set forth the point of view of the leaders in the exploration, gather up the values in the methods used, and summarize the difficulties and the results achieved, as viewed by the teacher of the class and the principal of the school.

The Union School of Religion has been conducted under the auspices of the Department of Religious Education and Psychology of Union Theological Seminary, as an experiment in religious education, independent of official approval or censorship from the Seminary, in order to give it a freedom in its experimentation. The Sunday morning sessions continued for three hours, giving to the children an opportunity for a wider range of activity than is possible in most Sunday Schools. The morning activities were in general as follows, though with many variations: 9:15-10:00 Worship service, usually held in the chapel of the Seminary; 10:00-10:30 hand-work under the supervision of Miss Dorothy Smedley, art and hand-craft specialist; 10:30-11:00 recreation either out-of-doors or in the gymnasium; 11:00-11:30 discussion of some problem raised in the chapel talk or of personal questions which the children voluntarily brought forward for consideration; 11:30-12:15 consideration of a major area of study, including a story and its discussion. During the first semester, when this class was a part of the primary department, the schedule was slightly different, the first period from 9:15-10:00 being spent in hand-work and a second period then being given to attendance at the chapel service of the primary department.

The work of this class is of special significance because of the maturity and objectiveness which the children developed, shown markedly in their attitudes toward their own conduct problems. This result was made possible because both teacher and principal in their preparation had a combination important for leaders in religious education, but not usually found: viz., a mastery of the newer methods in building a curriculum around life experiences and in using the democratic process, and also an insight into the emotional factors in the experiences of children which the work of the social psychiatrist is now making available. The record reveals how a Sunday-school class may be used to help in the solution of the conduct problems of children on a basis consistent with the best modern procedures in behavior difficulties.

The attitude of both teacher and principal toward the children was that of belief in the integrity of these children as individuals. Because the children proved that this faith in them was not misplaced this record is being published, in the hope that it may inspire other teachers to greater confidence in children under their guidance.

HARRISON SACKET ELLIOTT,
Director, Department of Religious Education and Psychology, Union Theological Seminary.

APPRECIATIONS

In publishing these records no claim is made to originality in the point of view which underlies the experiment. We are debtors to many who through the years have contributed to our education and who have encouraged us in our experimentations. We can mention here the names of but a few of our most immediate helpers.

To Professor Harrison S. Elliott, Director of the Department of Religious Education and Psychology of the Union Theological Seminary, under whose auspices the Union School of Religion was conducted, we are indebted for his continuing supervision, counsel, and encouragement in the enterprise, and for his frequent assistance in the process of preparing the manuscript for publication.

We acknowledge also our gratitude to Dr. Adelaide T. Case and to Dr. Goodwin B. Watson for reading the manuscript and for making valuable suggestions.

To Dr. Thaddeus H. Ames, a practicing psychiatrist in New York City, we are peculiarly indebted for help in gaining a truer insight into human nature and for his contribution toward the achieving of a better technique in personal contacts with children.

We appreciate gratefully the assistance of Miss Mary Jenness in editorial work on the manuscript.

Especial mention should be made of the work of Mr. Spear Knebel, a fellow teacher of a sixth-grade class of boys in the Union School of Religion, who was responsible for a number of the chapel services which resulted in some of the most productive class discussions of the year.

The authors consider themselves fortunate in having secured as illustrator for the book, Miss Dorothy Smedley, who for three years was art and handcraft specialist in the school. Her understanding of the spirit of the enterprise has enabled her to say some things through her drawings which the diary records themselves could not reveal.

Helen Firman Sweet,
Teacher of the Third-Grade Class, Union School of Religion, 1927-28.

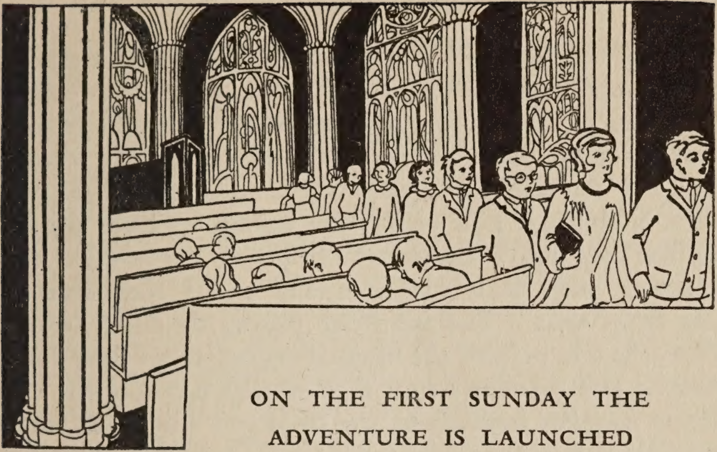
Sophia Lyon Fahs,
Principal of the Union School of Religion, 1926-29, and Lecturer on Religious Education, Union Theological Seminary.

January, 1930, New York City.

PART I

THE RECORD OF THE EXPLORATION

CONSISTING OF THE TEACHER'S WEEKLY DIARY RECORDS OF THE WORK OF A THIRD-GRADE CLASS, IN THE UNION SCHOOL OF RELIGION, FROM SEPTEMBER 2, 1927, THROUGH MAY 20, 1928.



ON THE FIRST SUNDAY THE ADVENTURE IS LAUNCHED

AT a little after 9.15, four girls, Lucy, Jean, Ruth and Elizabeth, and two boys, Philip and John, together with the teacher, gathered in a professor's office at Union Theological Seminary.

On this the first Sunday of the school year, everyone in the group was feeling a sense of strangeness and expectancy, since Ruth was the only one among them, not excepting even the teacher, who had been a member of the Union School of Religion before.

The first half hour was spent in an effort to become acquainted. Each child told his age, the day school he attended, what his father did, and how many brothers and sisters he had. The professions of the fathers represented a wide range of interest, including business, music, science, and religion.

A few minutes before ten o'clock, the group left this classroom, where they were beginning to feel at home, to go to a place which the teacher called the chapel. Down the interesting winding stone stairway, and back through a long hallway they went with their teacher. Beyond a turn in the hall they found other children waiting for them—the kindergarten, first- and second-grade classes. Together the entire group passed down a quaint cloister and up more steps to the entrance of the big chapel. Then to the sound of stately music coming from an unseen, mysterious pipe organ, the children walked quietly up the long aisle between rows of empty pews—their eyes roaming wide with curiosity—and seated themselves in the front seats. The tall stone pillars, the high arching roof, the two pulpits, the recessed organ, the softly-colored stained-glass windows with their strange pictures, the dim lights hanging high above the children's heads—all commanded wonder and admiration.

A fitting place it seemed in which to sing of "the beauty of the earth," and of how full the world is of "a number of things" which make us all feel "as happy as kings." Then, too, Mrs. Mildred Morgan, the leader of the service, told stories of Luther Burbank, showing how he had made the world happier and more beautiful through new and lovelier flowers and larger fruits and vegetables which he had learned to grow. Burbank was really helping God to make a finer world, she said, and perhaps everyone has a chance in some way to make the world more beautiful.

Back again in their own classroom, the children talked over what they had liked best in this experience, called "a worship service." They were unanimous in saying that they liked the organ music most of all. In her attempt to draw from the children what they had learned from the talk about Burbank, the teacher was surprised to find that they felt Burbank's great contribution to the world had been made through his improving things or through his saving people's time. For instance, by making bigger potatoes, Burbank had made it possible for people to get as much nourishment out of one potato as formerly was to be had from two. He thereby reduced the time spent in raising and handling two potatoes to that needed for raising and handling one. For the same reason the children also mentioned Burbank's service in reducing the size of the seed in the prune. A typically American set of values!

After this, each child told what he had enjoyed most during his summer vacation. A keen interest in animals was disclosed in this discussion. John had some very interesting things to tell about frogs, such as the fact that their ears are in their hind feet. The teacher told a story of some chipmunks she had seen during the summer, storing nuts in their pouches and later burying the nuts for winter's use. This led to a discussion of how animals work largely through instinct and through trial and error, and how people have minds which they may use to think things out intelligently.

During this discussion Philip had whispered a bit to Jean. When he had finished saying what he wished, the teacher asked the group what they thought of whispering. John's quick response was, "Well, I don't think it is a good plan, because while you are whispering you might miss something important that was being said. Philip missed a lot of things about frogs by whispering while I was talking."

Jean said, "If people whisper when someone in the group is talking it keeps the person they whisper to from hearing, too."

Ruth added, "It is rude, too, and interrupts."

The children could think of nothing good that comes of whispering. Philip kept very quiet during all this discussion and did not whisper again during the rest of the morning.

After this the teacher told a story, "Why the Magpie's Nest is Not Well Built." When in the beginning of things the birds were all making their nests, the magpies were lazy. They neither tried to learn to build nests by the trial and error method, nor would they help when the other birds tried to show them how. The magpies thought that if they waited someone would build a nest for them, but no one did. When, therefore, the magpies found themselves left alone and mother magpie wanted to lay her eggs, she had to throw together any sort of nest she could, and a very untidy and poor nest she made. This story led to a discussion by the children of how we learn to do things.

John said, "We learn by trying." The necessity when we are young of building up the kind of habits which we think are desirable, seemed quite plain because, if learning is put off too long, we may find ourselves, like the magpies, left without knowledge when the need for it arises.

From magpies, the conversation drifted back to frogs. Each child decided that on the following Sunday he would tell some interesting story about frogs.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The teacher's first desire was to create an atmosphere which would encourage friendliness and confidence between herself and the children. She considered it time well spent when each child was given an opportunity to express himself in a friendly, informal manner, in order that he might feel "at home."

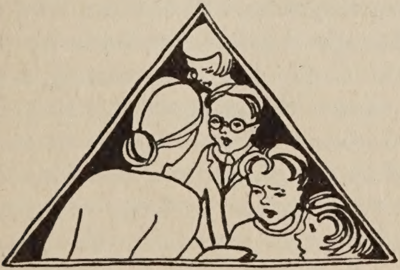
She hoped, also, to find "leads" suggesting the children's interests as a starting point for building the year's curriculum. She and the principal had agreed in advance that a study of animal life would probably be a realm of interest for this grade group and that such study would offer opportunities for the discussion of behavior problems and might also lead to a finer appreciation of purpose in the universe. As a method of suggesting to the children this realm of probable interest, the teacher therefore had planned in advance to ask them to tell about their summer vacations. She expected that animals would play an important part in the stories the children told, and she herself was prepared to tell incidents of animal life from her own summer's experiences.

QUERIES

1. Is it worth while to take time during the opening session of the year for the kind of conversation which will make the children feel "at home"? How can this be planned for? Or will it come about of itself as the class proceeds?

2. Why was the matter of whispering referred to the class for settlement? Would you have focussed group opinion by leading the class to make a rule regarding whispering? Or was it better to leave the matter as the teacher did?

3. Do you ever discuss the "children's sermon," or any part of the worship service of the church school with your class? What would you expect to accomplish by so doing?



THE CHILDREN GET A THRILL OUT OF FACING REAL DIFFICULTIES

Five children were present in the class today. Lucy and John, who had been present last Sunday, were absent. Janet joined the class for the first time. The two absences were probably due to the rainy day.

Although the vacation stories of the previous week had indicated an interest in frogs, the teacher was surprised when Ruth arrived carrying a glass jar inside of which was sitting a live frog. The children were all the more interested when they were told it was a frog which Ruth's mother had brought home from Germany where during the summer the family had been visiting a grandmother. Ruth told us various things about this frog, how he acted as a sort of barometer by sitting down in a corner on rainy days and by climbing to the top of his jar on pleasant days. While their interest in frogs was warm, the children decided that next week they would try modelling frogs in clay. Ruth, who had been very quiet and shy the Sunday before, seemed to come into her own today. She talked a great deal about Germany and about the habits of her little frog.

Philip said, "Oh, I forgot the mica I was going to bring. Wasn't I dumb?"

The teacher told him to bring it next week and took occasion to suggest how many things there are to see and to learn about in the world, things that show us what a wonderful universe it is of which we are a part.

In their hand-work the children used crayons. The teacher suggested that each one should draw the loveliest thing he could think of. "It may be a sunset or a rainbow or an animal or anything," said the teacher. Philip and Jean began at once, Jean quickly drawing a sunset over the Hudson and Philip picturing Mount Baldy with airplanes flying over it. For a long time Elizabeth sat quietly, looking around, apparently thinking. Then she, too, drew a sunset over the Hudson.

Ruth said, "I can't think of anything lovely." "What about your little green frog on the moss?" asked the teacher. Whereupon Ruth drew a picture of a frog catching flies.

Philip said to her, "You ought to know what you are going to draw before you begin."

Jean kept up a continual conversation as she worked and from time to time commented on the others, saying to Elizabeth, "You're a lazy-bones."

After Ruth finished her picture, she took another sheet of paper and quite without suggestion from the teacher, drew a flower garden with a little girl watering flowers.

Janet, arriving late this morning, entered at this point. Philip piped up, "Oh, I know her, she is in my room at Horace Mann."

After being introduced to the children, Janet seemed to feel herself welcome and was at ease. She proceeded to draw flowers in sunshine.

When the drawings were finished the children exhibited their pictures, and had a discussion over Philip's. He had drawn mountains, the sun and clouds and two airplanes. The teacher asked the children which of Philip's drawings were of things God had made and which were of things men had made.

"Men made the airplanes, and God made the other things," said Jean.

"Yes, but men couldn't have made airplanes without God, because there wouldn't have been any men unless God had made them," said Elizabeth.

"Man learned from studying birds how to make airplanes, and God made the birds," commented Ruth.

"Men used their brains," added Philip, "and learned how to make machinery, too."

During this discussion, the children seemed to develop some appreciation of the wonderful resources in the world and to sense something of the meaning of man's power to create greater values.

Philip and Jean were chosen to lead the class down the stairs and to the chapel. The children were not very orderly, but at the time the teacher said nothing about the disorder.

The thought of the primary department's worship service again centered in the story of the achievements of Luther Burbank. Mrs. Fahs, the leader, gave more details than had been given the week before, bringing out the fact that Burbank, through his long years of study and experiment, really created new kinds of plants, such as new dahlias and new cacti. "Everyone has in him the possibility of making something new," she said. "We all may share in this creating of better things." The attention of the third-grade class was almost perfect during her talk.

On returning to the classroom, the teacher asked the group what they thought of Philip and Jean, their leaders to and from chapel.

"They weren't very good," said Elizabeth. "They rushed out of the elevator before the younger classes did, and they made a noise."

Jean said, "Well, I don't ever want to have Philip for a partner again. He acted so silly and tried to say I was 'The Queen of France.' "

"I know we weren't any good," admitted Philip, "and I don't ever want to lead again."

The teacher, feeling that Philip was perhaps running away from his responsibility rather than trying to face it, said to the class, "What do you think of Philip's saying he doesn't want to lead again?"

"That is foolish," said Janet. "He ought to see how well he can lead another time."

The teacher asked what should be expected of people who were selected as leaders.

"We can expect them to be dependable," was Janet's idea.

"Well, I'll lead once more and show you if you want me to," said Philip, stepping back into the picture.

The teacher asked if they didn't think this was a better spirit for Philip to show than to say that he wouldn't ever lead again. They all agreed that it was.

Because it was rainy and the children could not go out for games, they played a few minutes in the room. Philip said, "I know a game," and he quickly made an arrow out of paper and shot it up into the air. The children tried to see who could catch it first. Philip thought he ought to do the shooting every time, but Jean said the one who caught it ought to have the next turn to shoot it, saying, "That is fair play." The others agreed with Jean, so Philip followed her suggestion.

After the games, the children discussed the chapel service for a time. Jean said, "What I like best is Burbank's making the cactus so it has no stickers." The teacher asked her why she thought that was a useful thing for him to do and Jean replied, "So cows can eat it and not get stickers in their mouths." Philip liked the story because Burbank made things in the world better. Janet liked it because he improved the flowers and helped God to make a lovelier world. Elizabeth and Ruth agreed with her.

The teacher then told how her own little girl on looking one night at a lovely sunset beyond the mountains had said, "I want to write a letter to God to thank him." The children were asked what they would have said to the little girl if she had been their sister.

Jean said, "Well, she couldn't write to God because He is everywhere."

"A little of God is in me and in everybody," said Ruth. "Why didn't you tell her to write a letter and eat it and then the part of God that is in her could read it?"

"No, that couldn't be the way," said Janet. "But couldn't you tell her to think her letter like thoughts and then God would know how she felt no matter where He is."

This suggestion met with the children's approval. The teacher then said, "In what other places besides in sunsets do we see or feel God?"

"Where people are kind," Elizabeth said.

The teacher suggested that she thought we saw Him working also through people such as Burbank.

The teacher proposed that the class spend the last half hour in discussing something that had happened during the week when the children themselves had seen some action that hadn't seemed just right or when they had been puzzled as to what should be done? Her aim was to encourage the children to talk over real situations out of their own experiences so that they might have practice in thinking things over and might see action in the light of consequences, thus learning to make moral decisions more intelligently.

Janet said, "At recess one day this week some of the boys got into a car which was in the road and broke the brake and did all kinds of things."

"What do you think of their doing that?"

"It wasn't right, because the car didn't belong to them, and it is wrong to touch other people's things," was Janet's ready answer.

"They might have got hurt, too," added Ruth, "because it is dangerous to play with an engine."

Jean said, "They should have been made to go in and miss recess and miss recess another day, too."

"They should have been whipped," said Ruth, thinking, too, of punishment.

"No, I wouldn't whip them," objected Philip, "but I'd make them miss recess."

"Can you think of any better ways than these of helping those boys not to do that sort of thing again?" asked the teacher.

Since no ideas were forthcoming, the teacher reminded them, "How did we manage it ourselves when we thought Jean and Philip were not good leaders as we came from chapel today? Did we punish them?"

"No," said Philip. "You talked it over with us, and when I lead again I'll do it right."

The idea of not needing punishment for such wrong-doing seemed to come to many of the children as a discovery.

The teacher then told them about a little girl whose mother had promised to read a story to her. Before the mother had a chance to make good her promise, however, a caller came and as long as the visitor stayed, the child made a nuisance of herself. The teacher asked the children what else the little girl might have done.

Ruth suggested that the child should be locked in her room if she made a fuss when the caller was there. The others did not seem to favor this suggestion.

"She should have behaved so the caller would have thought she was a nice child," said Jean.

"Yes, because the caller might go out and tell everyone she wasn't a nice girl!" added Elizabeth.

The teacher asked, "Should we do right simply because of what we think other people may think of us?"

"No, I don't think so," answered Janet.

None of the children seemed able to bring forward any better reason for behaving well under such conditions. The teacher suggested that even though the child might have had a right to fuss, if she had been thoughtful of the caller, she would have been courteous in such an emergency. We have to adjust ourselves to other people as we go along, the teacher pointed out, and we cannot think merely of our own rights.

These discussions kept the children keenly interested.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

Realizing the importance of being aware of each child in the group as a separate personality, the teacher took special pains throughout the entire morning to "bring out" the shy child. (See Chapter on "Helping Children to Find Themselves.")

In the hand-work period opportunity was given to do something creative. The children's drawings served a three-fold purpose. They became the expressions of the children's own thoughts and feelings, they revealed to the teacher more fully the children's interests, and they opened up fruitful subjects for discussion as the children exhibited their work.

The policy of referring disciplinary problems to the children for consideration and settlement was adopted because of our belief that character is best developed when children have the opportunity to face real situations of this sort and to make their own decisions. The matter of Philip's leading to chapel was accordingly brought up for discussion. For two reasons, the teacher withheld her comments until the end. If children are to think for themselves they need to feel a sense of freedom, and moreover they develop independence and a sense of responsibility when their initiative is called forth.

QUERIES

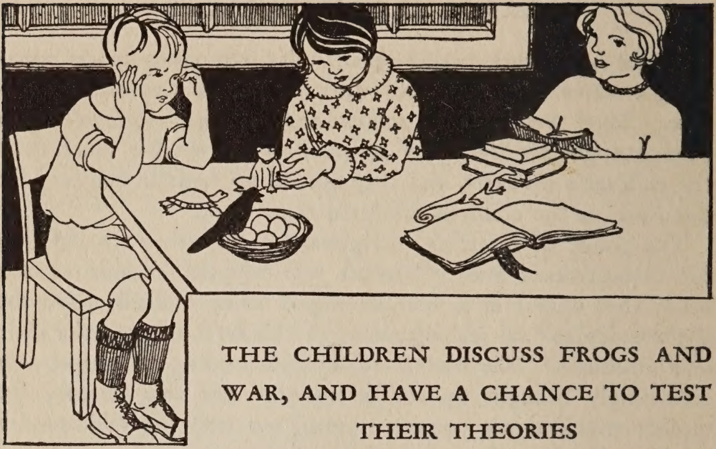
1. Under what conditions is it possible for a shy child to make his own free contribution to the group? What effect will his participation have upon the child who tends to monopolize the center of the stage?

2. Was Philip's poor leadership important enough to be made a subject for class discussion? If so, why? When is it desirable to obtain a class verdict on behavior? What would have been the effect if the teacher had put emphasis on Philip's failure rather than on his desire to try again?

3. Why do many religious leaders deliberately use the unfinished story?

4. Should a Sunday-school teacher take class time for the discussion of incidents which have happened between Sunday sessions? Might the teacher sometimes cite typical incidents if experiences are not forthcoming from the children? What is gained when the children choose the incidents?

5. Why were the children in this group so frank?



THE CHILDREN DISCUSS FROGS AND WAR, AND HAVE A CHANCE TO TEST THEIR THEORIES

ALL the members of the class were present today except Lucy, and all present arrived on time.

During the period of hand-work the children had planned to model frogs, but since the clay purchased by the school had not come, they drew with crayons instead and decided to model next week. All the children seemed much interested in the project which was taking shape as an enterprise in nature study.

When John had finished drawing his frog, he diverted attention a bit by drawing a picture of a fort illustrating the movie "Beau Geste" which he had recently seen. He was eager to tell the story of it, too, and did so briefly when displaying his drawing. The teacher used this opportunity to tell a story of her own about the interesting habits of wood frogs and their ability to change color according to the color of their surroundings. The teacher asked the children why they thought the frog was made so that he could turn green if he were on a leaf, brown if he were on the bark of a tree, and white, if on a stone.[1]

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[1] *First Lessons in Nature Study,* Edith M. Patch.

John said, "That is his way of protecting himself. Lions can roar and scare things away, and dogs can bite, and frogs can change color so that nothing can see them or hurt them."

"Isn't it wonderful that God fixed it so everything can take care of itself?" exclaimed Janet.

John told about some lizards that have the ability to change color just as the wood frogs have.

"What if a wood frog got on a red autumn leaf, would he turn red?" asked Jean.

No one knew what he would do under those circumstances, but John said, "I'll find out for you next week."

The children decided that when the clay came they would illustrate this idea of nature's protective devices by placing clay frogs on green leaves and painting the frogs green, and by putting others on bark and painting those frogs brown.

This week Ruth brought not only her frog, but also several interesting stones with mica in them. She told how she had found the mica as she was walking by the river. The others became so much interested that they asked if, at the recreation period, they might go to the river to see if they, too, could find mica.

While the children were showing their pictures to each other, Janet held up hers and told about it. "Well, your sky ought to come down to your hillside. You never saw sky stop half way up like that," said John critically.

"No, but it's more imaginary the way Janet has it," said Ruth in defense of Janet. "If she had it blue way down to the hillside it would look all dark and as though it weren't a pleasant day."

Then Ruth showed her picture of a frog in a tiny pond in front of a house, saying, "I know this isn't the way it would really be but I imagine it like this." Ruth was making her own place in the class, standing up for herself and for others and contributing to discussions.

While the children were drawing pictures, Jean said, "I went to West Point yesterday and watched the soldiers drill. It was great!" The interested response which came from the rest of the group showed that most of the children had already been to West Point.

The teacher asked, "What do you think of having a regular school where they train boys to fight?"

"It's dumb," was John's emphatic response.

"But you have to have an army to protect the country," insisted Janet. "Bad people might come and try to put us all in jail and then we'd need an army."

"I'd like to be a soldier," exclaimed Philip.

"Well, I wouldn't; you only get killed," said John.

"Don't think about that part of it," added Philip.

"People will probably continue to have misunderstandings and quarrels," said the teacher. "If they don't fight to settle their disputes, what could they do instead?"

"They should talk it over," said John. "Fighting only makes them madder."

"Well, we might feel that way, but some other country might not want to talk it over. Then what would you do?" asked Janet.

"Just not fight with them," was John's definite answer.

All agreed that John's way would be the best. Apparently it was the romantic part of being a soldier that had appealed to Philip.

At the primary department's chapel service this week, Mrs. Fahs told the story of another man who had made part of the world a more beautiful place in which to live. It was the story of "Egg Island," told by Dr. Edward Bok in his Autobiography. The hero of the story was Dr. Bok's grandfather who, as a young man, was sent by the King of Holland to a barren island infested by pirates. The elder Mr. Bok not only was the means of transforming the pirates into good citizens but he also changed a treeless, sandy, birdless waste into a spot famed for its trees, its song birds, and later as a favorite rendezvous for artists.

After chapel the class went to Riverside Drive for a walk, and to search for mica. Throughout the trip, Philip kept wandering away from the group. At one time the teacher became worried lest he had gone too far and asked John to go and fetch him. Soon the teacher's attention was summoned by a loud commotion, and she discovered John dragging Philip by main force up the path while Philip was yelling at the top of his lungs.

"John, I thought you didn't believe in force when we were discussing it this morning," said the teacher in surprise. "You suggested talking it out as a better way."

John laughed, saying, "That's right," while Philip said, "Yes, and if you had asked me to come because Mrs. Sweet wanted me to I would have come right away, but you just yanked me like a dog." After this the two came along very peaceably.

Since the class had had some difficulty on the way out in crossing the Drive, the teacher suggested that they plan a better way to go back. They decided to march two by two and have a captain who would say "Go" when the red light changed. Nevertheless, Philip lagged behind, keeping the class waiting. When finally he came along he apologized. The teacher suggested that Philip wouldn't make a very good soldier if he didn't keep with his group.

Again he found an alibi. "Well, I'm not big enough to be a soldier yet, anyway."

John said, "Well, you have to learn these things when you are little."

Back in the classroom again, the children began displaying the treasures they had found on the walk—a few interesting stones and berries. Philip proudly exhibited a piece of coal.

"That probably didn't form in the ground there at all. It fell off a train," said John in a superior air.

"It might have come from the ground right there," insisted Philip.

The teacher held up the piece of coal and then held up a stone and asked the children how it was that one would burn and one would not.

Jean said, "It must be in the way it is made."

The teacher asked the children how they supposed it came about that people discovered that coal would burn. They thought some man years and years ago discovered it by studying rocks.

"Probably a hundred and twenty-five years ago," said John.

"Longer than that," said Elizabeth.

The teacher asked, "How long do you think man has been discovering things?"

"For nineteen hundred and twenty-seven years," said Ruth.

"No," objected Jean, "because that was just when Jesus was born and Adam and Eve came about four thousand years before that and all that time men were discovering things."

From coal, the teacher turned the discussion to man. She told how many thousands of years people had been living on this earth. She sketched briefly some of the recent discoveries of the remains of primitive men found in caves, from which scientists can build up a picture of the life of those prehistoric people. She told how different those early men must have been from men today, saying that they probably were more like monkeys. Then she told how, as the years and centuries went by, men had slowly learned to do more and harder things. Children learned to do things their parents could not do. Thus through thousands of years men had been learning and as men learned they came to be different from what they had been before.

First there were simple, foolish, monkey-like people who could neither talk, start fires, nor build houses. After thousands and thousands of years there came to be men who could talk, read letters and write books, men who could do many wonderful things such as building airplanes, and radios and tall buildings, as men do today. As the children of the class sat trying to imagine the long, long story of man's evolution, they seemed caught by the spell of the wonder of it.

Since during the discussion, the story of Adam and Eve was mentioned, the teacher told the story to the class. She explained that it was a story that the Hebrews had told long years past, when probably people had not yet learned to read and write. Perhaps a group of men sitting together one day centuries ago were wondering where the first man came from and someone told this story.

"When will the time come that everything there is to be discovered will be discovered and finished?" asked Ruth.

The teacher asked the children if they thought the day would ever come when everything would be discovered.

Jean said, "No, I think there will always be more to discover all the time. There always has been more and there probably always will be."

"It will never be done," added Philip; "there will always be more for everybody to discover and do." The others seemed to agree with Jean and Philip.

By this time the table at which the children had been working was decidedly untidy. As the children were clearing it up, they found at John's place an eraser that had been broken in two and bitten off at both ends. John said it didn't belong to him, that he had taken it off the desk in the room when he was drawing. "What shall we do about it?" asked the teacher.

"Well, it is John's responsibility because he took it," said Janet.

"He should have asked you if he could use it," said Jean.

"I didn't do it on purpose," pleaded John. "I would get interested in what we were talking about, and then I just chewed it and played with it without thinking."

The teacher said, "Since John did not do this on purpose and since we are a group using this room, do you think the group should take the responsibility for replacing it?" "No," they said with one accord. Janet insisted, "John should take the whole responsibility because we had nothing to do with it." The others thought the worst feature was John's taking the eraser without asking, when it did not belong to him. John said he would replace it next week with a new eraser.

In discussing the chapel service, all the children said that the part they liked best was the story about Bok and Egg Island. The teacher asked what they had got out of it.

John said, "Bok fixed the island up for the pirates instead of fighting them to make them stop being pirates."

Janet said, "Yes, and it worked. They got interested and farmed."

The last period was taken up with the election of officers. The teacher asked the children what officers they wished to have. They said president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. She asked them why they needed a treasurer and they said, "To take up the collection." The question why a collection should be taken up was then raised by the teacher. Janet said, "So we can buy things for poor people. We always take collections." The children agreed that they wanted to bring money to help sick people or poor people at Christmas.

They decided to vote by ballot for their officers. John was made president; Elizabeth, vice-president; Jean, secretary; and Ruth, treasurer. Ruth seemed afraid when she heard of her office, and said, "I don't want to do it." The teacher suggested that as Philip had received the next number of votes he might be assistant treasurer and help Ruth count the money. Ruth was very much pleased and said she would be treasurer. The class approved. Ruth then collected the money and she and Philip counted it and made a report.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

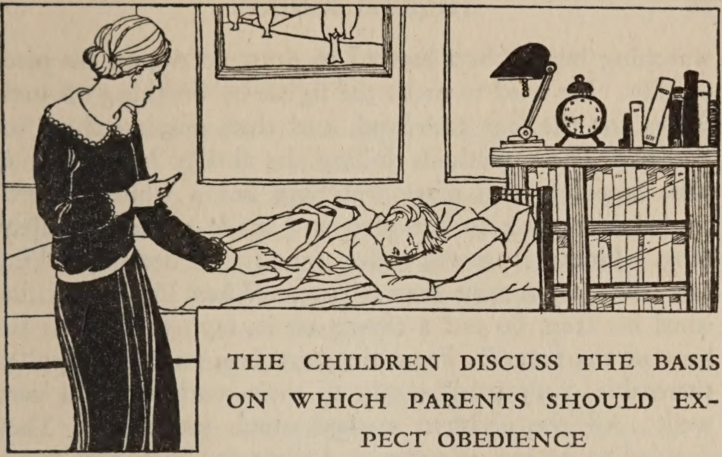
The question of when to follow the "lead" of an interest shown, and when not to do so is illustrated in today's session. After John had told the group about a movie he had seen, the teacher was ready immediately with a story of her own, along the line of nature study, since she realized that stories of movies might not lead on to fruitful discussion. Later, when another child mentioned having visited West Point, the teacher saw the possibility of a valuable discussion on war and peace. She, therefore, encouraged the conversation. The teacher's task is to maintain a sensitiveness to her group, to appreciate and encourage individual contributions, and at the same time to keep permanent values clearly in mind.

The method of turning the children's questions back to them for consideration serves the two-fold purpose of stimulating the children to think for themselves, and of giving them the feeling that their opinions are as much respected as are those of the teacher. An illustration of this technique appeared in the session today when Ruth asked if the time would ever come when everything in the world would be finished and the teacher asked the children what they thought instead of answering the question herself.

The teacher took the initiative in making the suggestion that Philip assist Ruth as treasurer when Ruth evidenced fear at her responsibilities if elected to the office. Occasionally the ideal of the democratic handling of a group must be tempered with common sense, where a teacher has more insight into a personal situation than the children can be expected to possess. (See Chapter on "Helping Children to Find Themselves.")

QUERIES

1. What should a teacher do when her class wishes to discuss movies and she prefers to have them discuss something else, for example, Jacob?
2. Does the leader lose prestige by referring so many questions back to the group? What is to be gained by this process?
3. What do you think of the leader's way of calling the attention of John and Philip to the fact that their later practice did not agree with the theories they had expressed?
4. What turn might have been given to her remarks that would have left a greater sense of failure? Would this have been unfortunate? Why or why not?



THE CHILDREN DISCUSS THE BASIS ON WHICH PARENTS SHOULD EXPECT OBEDIENCE

THERE were six children in the class today, including two new pupils, Robert and George:[1] Elizabeth was absent, having told the teacher that she was to be out of town for the week-end. Ruth also was absent. Lucy never returned after the first Sunday. Janet came quite late, and when asked why she was tardy she said she had waited to clean her white shoes before coming. The teacher suggested that it would be a good thing to plan ahead so as to reach school on time, since a child coming in late delayed the work of the morning.

During the first period, the class went to the handcraft room, where they began modelling frogs in clay, under the direction of Miss Smedley, the art and handcraft specialist, who was available by appointment to any class in the school needing her assistance. Miss Smedley was of the greatest help to the children, showing them how an artist would go about modelling something in clay, and making a little frog herself for them to see.

Without listening to Miss Smedley, and without even watching her, Robert started to draw a frog on his piece of clay. He tried to make the figure by breaking off little pieces for the legs and head, and then putting them together. These methods failing, he finally looked up at Miss Smedley, and after watching her a while, he proceeded according to her plan and made a very excellent frog. Janet's frog was rather fanciful in design, looking more like a pin tray than a frog. When Philip had finished his frog, he put a crown on it, saying, "This is the king of the frogs." From the start Jean and John applied themselves very intelligently to their work and did very well. All the children seemed much interested. They decided to go out at recess and hunt for bark and stones and leaves on which to put the frogs the next week when they were ready to paint them, in order to show how nature has developed protective coloring for these animals.

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[1] George came this one Sunday only.

The primary chapel service had been planned by the second-grade class under the leadership of Miss Ethel Mattison, their teacher.

One of the children told the story of how the class had decided to spend their money to buy a pencil sharpener for their room. Then three of the children told in succession of an excursion around the Seminary under the guidance of Professor Rockwell. They told how long ago the site for the Seminary had been chosen, how Professor Knox had insisted on a special automatic elevator in the library, and of the many interesting things they had seen when they went downstairs to the book stacks. The class also sang a little song which they had composed together, teaching it to the rest of the department. These are the words of the song:

"We are thankful
We are thankful

For the boats that brought the books
To the Seminary."

The class had planned also a special organ number which was played by Dr. Charlton.

In discussing the chapel service afterwards, Janet said, "I liked hearing all those stories about Union."

"I did, too; it was awfully interesting," said Jean.

"I liked the little song the children had made up the best!" was Philip's comment.

"I liked the organ music best," said John. "I was thinking about flowers and birds and about Jesus all the time Dr. Charlton was playing. I thought to myself if they hadn't killed Jesus he might be alive today."

"Do you believe He would still be living?" asked the teacher.

"No, because it has been over a thousand years," said Jean, "but His spirit is still living."

"Nobody really knows if His spirit is alive or not," said Robert.

"Well, we can think it is," said Janet.

"We can all get an inspiration from His life no matter whether we feel His spirit is still in the world or not," added the teacher.

For their recreation the class went over to Riverside Drive, a block away, and began eagerly to gather bark, leaves and stones to go with their frogs. John and Robert took charge of leading the group and everyone was in good humor.

When they returned to the classroom, Jean, who came in last, looked at the vacant seat beside Robert and said, "I don't want to sit by Robert." The teacher asked her why. "I just don't," she answered.

Then, turning to the class, the teacher asked, "Do you know what a democracy is?" Being assured of their ignorance, she explained briefly that their class was a democracy, which meant that it was a group of people who took charge of themselves, everyone took part in making plans and had a chance to speak on any subject that was up for discussion. She said that if a democracy is to succeed everybody must feel respect for everyone else in the group, and that if anyone broke away from the rest, he was not taking his full responsibility. Democracy means that people must work together.

At this point John made the comment, "Yes, and we ought to feel the same about all of our class."

Jean without a word took her seat alongside Robert.

While out on the walk, Robert had not gathered any bark because he had decided to mount his frog on a leaf. When the class returned, however, he changed his mind and said he wished someone would give him some bark. Since no one responded, he said to Jean, "Will you give me some of your bark?" Janet whispered to her, "Say no." So Jean said, "You should have thought of it while you were out."

When the teacher brought the matter up for discussion, John said, "Of course he just changed his mind, and everybody does that, but if he had thought ahead as I did he would have collected everything and then he could have changed his mind as much as he wanted to, and still he would have had the things he needed."

"He should have asked me for some bark," said Philip gallantly, "and I would have given him some."

"Probably it is the wisest way to come prepared with everything," the teacher suggested, "but as Robert didn't, and as people often change their minds, what shall we do about it?" She pointed out the fact that among them they had enough bark to mount a dozen frogs so that it wasn't a matter of anyone's being deprived.

Janet said, "Well, I think we might as well give him some," and the others agreed.

After this the teacher asked if any difficult problem had come up during the week that anyone would like to have the class discuss. John said, "Yes, I had one this morning. I didn't want to come to Sunday school and my mother said I had to. Do you think I should have to come just because she said I had to?"

At once Jean replied, "Yes, you always ought to do whatever your mother says to do, and anyway everybody should come to Sunday school because it is a good thing to do."

George, a new member of the class today, said, "I think you should have come because you really wanted to. When you decided to join this class it was because you wanted to and I think you probably really wanted to come today, but maybe just for a minute you thought you didn't."

Robert, also new today, said, "My parents never do things that way with me. They would have said, 'All right, you don't have to go today,' and then I would have wanted to come. It is always like that. I came today and didn't know whether I was going to like it, but I do. It's lots like school, only we play more here."

"Well, your parents have had lots more experience than you have," said John, "and so it's hard not to mind them when they tell you to do something."

Getting a word in at this point the teacher asked, "Why didn't you want to come, John?"

"Because I was in the bath-tub having a good time, and I wanted to stay in longer," he said. "All I could think of in getting out was having to put on my best socks that I hate, and my best clothes."

"What would you have missed if you hadn't come today, John?"

"Oh, I would have missed making my frog, and next week when everyone else was painting his I wouldn't have any. I'm awfully glad I came."

The teacher put another question, "If your mother had said to you, 'Well, John, what do you suppose you will miss if you stay away today?' and if you had thought about modelling frogs in clay, do you suppose you would have decided for yourself to come?"

"Of course, I would," said John, "but she said, 'You have to go.' "

The teacher then addressed the class. "Do you think we ought to obey our parents just because they tell us to obey or do you think we should know the reason and obey because of the value in the thing itself—instead of just for the sake of obedience?"

"We should know the reason and obey on that account." Of this Robert was sure. Janet felt that we ought to obey just because our parents say so. Jean felt so, too. Philip and George thought that we should obey for the thing itself.

John said, "I think you should obey for the thing itself, but the trouble is that usually your parents know best, though you don't always think so."

"Well, when I don't mind my mother I have a funny feeling inside," said Janet.

The teacher asked if any of the other children knew what Janet meant, and they all said they did. She asked them if they knew what this feeling was, but they seemed unable to define it. She explained that it was the thing people sometimes call a guilty conscience, but attempted to give the children the idea that no one needs to have this feeling if he has done what he thinks is right. As a matter of fact the teacher felt at a great loss to know how to deal with this feeling of guilt.

Jean next brought up an episode that had happened at school. She said, "I got A plus in self-control on my report card, but there was one boy who just twitched around and pretended to fall down and did everything crazy one day while the teacher was talking. Why do you suppose he acted so silly?"

The teacher suggested that perhaps he had done so in order to be noticed, but she asked the children why they thought self-control was a good thing to have.

Jean said, "Because if we haven't self-control people will think we are lunatics."

"Well, you want to get a good mark in it at school," added Philip.

The teacher asked, "What happens when people don't have self-control? Suppose that Robert hadn't had any self-control today when he asked for bark, and no one had been willing to share with him, what do you think would have happened?"

"I would have hit one of you because it made me mad," Robert assured them.

The teacher asked them how they had felt when they had lost control of themselves. John said, "Well, you don't feel right somehow."

The teacher suggested that wars resulted sometimes when grown-ups lost control of themselves.

Philip said, "Oh, I've changed my mind from last week. I don't want to be a soldier any more. I'm going to be an electrical engineer."

"I suppose you'll change your mind again this week," said Jean, in a tone of superiority.

"No, I won't," retorted Philip. "I know I don't want to be a soldier."

At this point, the teacher changed the subject. Since she remembered that the children while on their walks had taken quite an interest in trees, she asked them to write down on paper all the ways in which trees are used. Later the children read their lists and the teacher added to their ideas by telling what a wonderful part trees play in the total scheme of the world. Their roots hold the soil together on the hillsides, and protect countries from floods by absorbing the rainwater. Moreover, trees provide shelter for animals and shade for man and add much to the world's beauty. It seemed impossible to the children to number all the many uses of trees.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The teacher purposely tried to assume an attitude of neutrality during the discussions until the children had been given free rein in expressing their own views without fear of disapproval on her part. In the discussion of the question whether or not Jesus is alive today, she purposely refrained from expressing her opinion, since she felt the group was not yet prepared to make a decisive answer. Instead she pointed out the inspirational value in Jesus' life that all may share, regardless of our philosophy or creed.

When the group was discussing Jean's problem of the silly boy, however, the teacher found she allowed her own idea to slip out first before she realized what she had done.

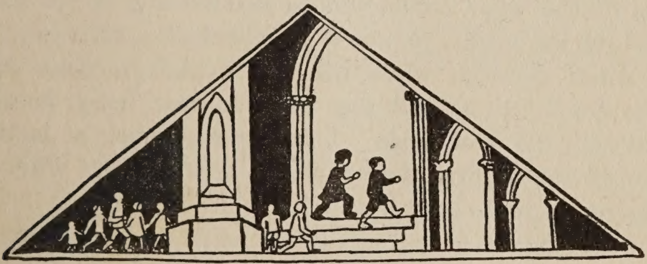
The teacher felt after the session that she had failed to handle adequately the question of a "guilty conscience," due to the fact that it involved an issue which was not clear in her own mind.

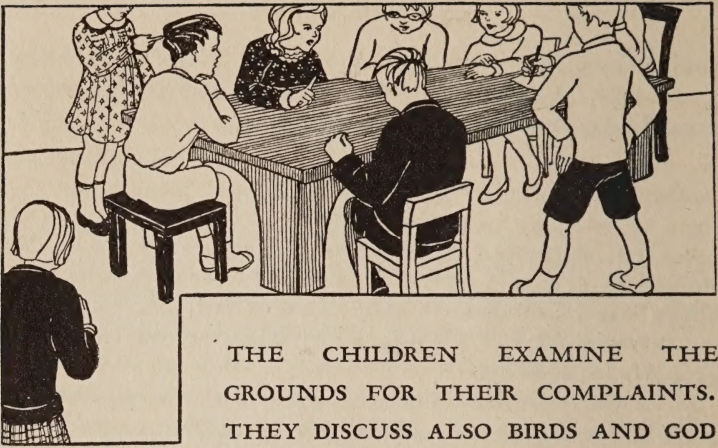
It might have been better to have confessed this to the children at the time. Or, she might have suggested discussing "conscience" more fully the following Sunday.

QUERIES

1. Has your class ever planned a worship service for its department? Has your class ever been given the chance to contribute original material—a class hymn or poem, or a story to any worship service? What, if anything, would be gained through such activity?

2. In the discussion on obedience Jean declared emphatically at the outset that you should always do what your mother says. Suppose the teacher had grasped at this opportunity to talk on the virtue of obedience, what would have happened to the discussion? Would the final result have been better or worse for the character growth of the children?





THE CHILDREN EXAMINE THE GROUNDS FOR THEIR COMPLAINTS. THEY DISCUSS ALSO BIRDS AND GOD

THERE were six children present today and all arrived on time except Janet who said that she had overslept.

The children spent the first period in the hand-craft room painting their frogs. Their keen interest kept them working hard. Again Philip announced that his was the king of the wood frogs, and he painted a gold crown to place on its head. Jean was a little inclined to criticize the other children while she was working. John said, "Oh, don't let's exhibit our work to everybody, because mine isn't my best work. I do my best work at home." Some of the children were slow in the work, and with the cleaning up to do they were a little late for chapel.

In the primary chapel service the point of special interest was the telling by Mrs. Fahs of "The Jolly Wooden Clown," a story by Eleanor F. Pease. The following outline is given to suggest the story so well told in *John Martin's Book* for December, 1924.

A toy maker was whittling a very jolly wooden clown to give to a crippled boy who lived in a flat above his shop. When the clown was finished, the toy maker put it up on a high shelf, intending to take it to the crippled boy as soon as he had time.

On the day before Christmas, the toy maker left his shop in charge of his housekeeper and went out to deliver toys to his customers. While he was gone, a rich gentleman and his boy came to the shop and bought many toys. The old housekeeper, being ignorant of the toy maker's plans for the clown, sold it to the rich man, charging him a gold piece. The toy maker on his return was heartbroken to find his little clown gone. Later the mother of the crippled boy came into the shop to receive the clown the toy maker had promised her. With a sincere apology for the mistake, the toy maker gave her a toy dog instead, and handed her the gold piece as well, wishing her and her son a very merry Christmas.

Long after, in the early spring, as the toy maker was sweeping in front of his shop, something dropped from a window above him. It was the little jolly wooden clown. With much curiosity, he hobbled upstairs to the flat and discovered that the rich gentleman's son had given the crippled boy a Christmas basket in which he had placed the jolly little clown. The toy maker's joy was unbounded, especially when he discovered that from the dancing, jumping clown the crippled boy had learned how to walk.

After chapel, the children returned to the hand-craft room to finish picking up the bark and leaves that had been left strewn around. As they worked, an unpleasant spirit developed.

Later, when the class started outdoors for their walk and John and Robert were leading the line, Jean said, "Oh, I wish we could change presidents. I don't like John at all. He always hits me every time he sees me at school."

"I'd like to change presidents, too," added Philip. "John's a bum leader."

When the children reached the park, seeing some squirrels scampering about, they watched them eagerly. Someone suggested bringing peanuts to feed the squirrels. Further on they found a tree lying across the path. John began telling a tale of how it had been knocked down. The story finished, Philip said to one of the girls, "John is a liar. I'll tell you how it really happened." Then Philip told his story.

When this excitement had calmed down, the children decided to play hide-and-seek for a time. They counted out and Philip was made "it." He was not skillful, however, at catching anyone. Finally when John ran in ahead of him and touched the base, Philip simply sighed, "John makes a bum president."

"What made you say that?" asked the teacher.

"Oh, he just is."

"Do you suppose that the fact that John got in ahead of you just now might be one reason why you say that about him?"

"Oh, I suppose so. I'm not very good at games."

The teacher pointed out that John's skill at games didn't really have any bearing on what kind of a president he made.

On returning to the classroom, the children spent the next period in discussion. The teacher quoted the various disagreeable remarks that had been made out of doors, and suggested that the children look at the reasons they had for the mean things they had said.

Jean said, "Well, I think we should elect a new president today. John hits me all the time, and when I fell down coming up the stairs he laughed at me."

"It may not have been polite for John to do that," admitted the teacher, "but are those the things which make him a poor leader?"

"No, it was mean of him to laugh, though," said Jean. "I think the way he nearly got us run over by a street car because he didn't watch the policeman was pretty bad." They all agreed that it was a serious thing for a leader to be careless in guiding his group across the street.

"Well, I think John is all right, and I want him still to be president," said Robert befriending him.

"That is because he hasn't done anything to you that made you mad," said Jean.

"We must be careful to keep this very clear," interposed the teacher. "We want to find out any charges against John as a leader. We don't want just to pick on him for personal reasons." She suggested to John that he speak for himself.

"All that they say is true," he said. "I think I had better not be president any more. I don't think I have the right habits. I know I hit people sometimes and I don't know why I do. Sometimes they hit me first and sometimes I hit them first. I just feel like doing it, that's all."

"I don't," said Jean.

"I heard someone else call him a liar outdoors this morning. What was that all about?" asked the teacher.

"It is terrible to call anybody a liar," said Robert, "because you never know whether you have the thing straight."

"Well, he wasn't telling that thing right," said Philip in self-defense.

"You can't ever be sure," said John. "Maybe that's the way it looked to me. How would you like to have me call you a liar?"

"People ought to think first how they would like to have things said to them before they say them to other people," said Janet.

The teacher asked them whether they thought they could use that idea as a guide before they did anything that might hurt another person, whether it was hitting him, laughing at him when he fell, or calling him names. They all agreed it would be a good idea to follow.

"Well, I'm willing to give John one more chance," said Philip, perhaps remembering the second chance he had once been given himself.

All the others agreed to this except Jean and Elizabeth who felt John had had his chance and failed. Since they asked the teacher for her opinion, she said she felt it would be fairer to give John another chance to make good. So John was given one more chance.

The children then discussed the chapel story with much interest. Each took his turn in retelling a part of it. Then the teacher asked which people in the story had tried to make the world a happier place in which to live.

John said, "Well, what I think is that God was the one who planned all that and saw to it that the little crippled boy got the clown in the end."

"What do the rest of you think?" asked the teacher.

"Well, in a way it was God," said Elizabeth, "because He made that kind toy maker and He is the one who makes people feel like being kind."

"The man in the carriage was trying to make people happy, too," said Janet, "by buying toys for those children."

"And the old woman was kind, too, who wanted to buy the clown for the sick boy," said Jean.

After one of the children had taken up the collection, the teacher opened up a discussion by asking what the children had learned about the world from their study of frogs.

Robert said, "We have learned all about how frogs develop and how wonderful it is."

John said, "We saw how frogs protect themselves and it makes us think how wonderful God is to have everything taken care of in the way that is best for them. He made the frogs so that they change color to hide themselves, and He gave them sticky saliva because they have to live on bugs, and it makes it easy for them to catch them that way. Every little thing is fixed right for them."

The teacher pointed out the fact that every living thing in nature has this power within it to grow and to adjust itself to the kind of life it has to live. She emphasized the fact that we can see God in nature everywhere.

The teacher suggested that it might be interesting to see how mothers in the animal world take care of their children, and compare these ways with how our mothers care for us. The children decided to watch birds to find out what they could about them. The teacher told about various kinds of birds and how they build their nests so as to protect their baby birds.

Robert told about a kind of bird that builds a sort of shelf over the top of the nest to keep rain out. He said, "Did you ever see a bird's skeleton and a man's side by side? They look just about the same."

"And gorillas look about the same, too," added John.

"Yes, and monkeys are lots like people, too," said Elizabeth. "They left a little of the monkey in people, because I watch my baby sister clench her fists just as the monkey does."

Here the teacher briefly explained the theory of evolution. The children seemed to gain a feeling of appreciation for it. Philip told how once this summer, after a bad hail storm, he and his father had found a bird suffering from a broken neck, and his father had killed it to put it out of suffering.

"He did just right," said John, "and I don't see why when people suffer and you know they are going to die you don't kill them."

The teacher asked what the others thought. Jean said, "My uncle suffered for three years and it was awfully hard on my mother. Now he has died."

"Well, I don't see why they don't take people out of their suffering. They do that for animals," said John.

The teacher asked if they could think of any reasons why people might be allowed to live. "Well, they might get well," thought Janet.

"Yes, and doctors know more about human beings," said the teacher, "so that often there is some chance, whereas with animals they don't know so much, and it seems cruel to let the animals suffer."

The teacher told more about the habits of birds to show how much birds resemble human beings. There was a visitor present who told the children a story about a bluejay and a woodpecker at her summer camp, much to the interest of the class.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

In the situation which developed today, the teacher realized that there was an abnormal degree of emotion, that the children were doing and saying mean things because of inner urges in themselves of which they were unconscious. Here were situations warm with jealousy and resentment. In attempting a discussion the teacher was somewhat fearful about the possibilities. She definitely tried, therefore, not to let herself become irritated, and not to condemn the children for their feelings nor for the mean repartee that had broken loose. She determined, if possible, to keep the attention of the children on the concrete issue. What were the actual grounds of complaint against John?

When the children asked for the teacher's judgment, she gave it to them frankly as a member of the group, as illustrated when they asked whether she thought John should be given a second chance as leader.

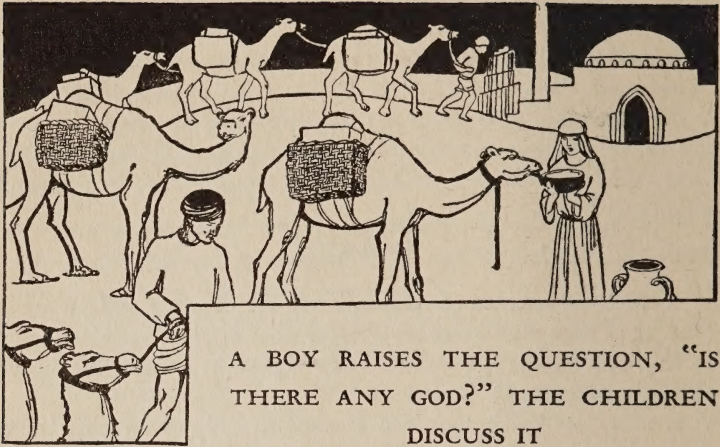
QUERIES

1. Does your sense of responsibility for condemning sin when you see it keep you from being calm yourself in a situation such as this one? Should a teacher show righteous indignation under such circumstances?

2. Do you think that the teacher should have openly condemned the children for calling one another liars, or should she merely have done as she did, namely, show them that these remarks were simply not to the point?

3. "I know I hit people sometimes, and I don't know why I do," said John. How would you try to find out why he hits people? Is it important to know?

4. Note the different statements made by the children about God. Would you have challenged any of their reasoning?



A BOY RAISES THE QUESTION, "IS THERE ANY GOD?" THE CHILDREN DISCUSS IT

THERE were seven children present today. Janet, who had been tardy for a number of Sundays, arrived early. Ruth returned today and explained that she had been absent because her sister was sick and she couldn't leave her. Since two children were quite late, their tardiness was discussed. As a result, the other children brought out the fact that the two children by being late had delayed the hand-work.

The class spent the first period using colored crayons in the drawing of birds. The teacher had brought a number of pictures of birds and the children selected those they wished to draw. When they had finished their drawings, they made an exhibit of them, each child telling some interesting thing about the bird he had drawn. On noticing that Janet had drawn a scarlet tanager, the teacher asked the children if they knew what the mother tanager looks like. Since none of them knew, she described its dull green hue, and asked the children why they thought nature had made the female bird that color. John said, "So no one can see her in the trees when she is sitting on her eggs."

Another child drew a king-fisher. Philip, having seen a king-fisher catch a fish and eat it, described the process in detail. The teacher told about some of the other habits of king-fishers, how the male bird will rise from his perch when the female comes and will fly around her head making a cooing noise, and how he watches the eggs while the mother king-fisher goes off to get her lunch. The teacher told a number of such episodes showing how very thoughtful certain father birds are of the mother birds.

At the primary chapel service, Mrs. Fahs told two stories. The first was about a boy who had been chosen by his group as their leader, and who was judged as "bum" by his class. His failure was due to the fact that he had not given a thought to the job for which the class had elected him. He was so proud of being "it" and of having the title of leader that his thoughts were all turned in on himself.

Mrs. Fahs told also a Syrian legend about the builders of the Mosque of St. Sophia in Constantinople. The story in brief is as follows:

A rich man gave large sums of money for the building of a beautiful church which he was ambitious to have named after himself. As his workmen led their camels day by day out into the country to the stone quarries, and as they led them back again with the heavy loads of stone, they passed the little rude cottage of two sisters, Azeeya and Sophia. Although these girls were extremely poor, having not enough with which to feed themselves, they fed the camels every time the caravan went by.

One morning to the surprise of the rich man, he found the two names Azeeya and Sophia engraved above the main entrance to the church, the place where he had commanded that his own name should be engraved. After a long search to discover who these two people, Azeeya and Sophia, were, the rich man finally was told the story of what the two girls had been doing. He at once recognized that they had given more to the church than he. He believed that an angel had written their names on the door of the church. Because of this story, the church today, although it is now a mosque, is still called by the name of St. Sophia.[1]

Following this service, the children went for a walk in fine spirit and played games in the Columbia campus. At one time during the games, Philip played the part of "it," and had the same difficulty in catching people that he had the previous week. When he saw that he was failing he sat down on a bench and said, "Oh, my knee hurts so I can't run or do anything." The teacher suspected that this was merely an excuse on his part, since last week he had acted in a similar way when he blamed the other children. She said to him, "Philip, it's funny your knee didn't hurt you at all until you were 'it.' "

"Yes," he said, "it is funny."

"Perhaps you just tried to think of some way by which to excuse yourself for not winning," she suggested.

Philip did not reply, but continued limping for quite a while. The teacher noticed, however, that his trouble ceased after he reached the Seminary building.

When the children had returned to their room the teacher asked them what they thought of their leaders and of the general spirit of the class. All felt that things had gone well. There was just one incident to be taken up. On the way to the chapel, Robert had dragged his feet along as he walked down the hall and had made a very unpleasant noise. Janet, as leader, had said to the teacher, "Mrs. Sweet, make Robert stop." The teacher replied, "It isn't for me to make Robert stop."

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[1] "My Syrian Neighbor Tells Me Stories," Mary Jenness, in *The Survey Graphic*, November, 1921.

The noise continued until the class reached the chapel door. In the discussion Robert spoke for himself at once. "It isn't for the leaders to make us do things. Everybody is supposed to look after himself."

"Yes," said John, "that is just the point. You weren't looking after yourself, and that's just why we have to have leaders. Of course, everybody should look after himself, but when they haven't got sense enough, like you, what then?"

Robert saw the point immediately, and looked rather sheepish. "What about it, Robert?" the teacher asked. "When the girls asked me to make you be quiet I refused, just for the reason you mention. I, too, believe that people should look after themselves. I gave you the privilege of looking after yourself, and then you failed, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did," he admitted.

The teacher then emphasized how careful we must be, if we hold certain views, to check up on ourselves occasionally and see that we actually practise them.

Then the teacher asked the class what they thought of the chapel service. John said, "I certainly thought about myself last Sunday when she was talking about leaders. Last Sunday I thought it was enough just being elected leader, and yet I wasn't acting like one at all."

The teacher asked the children how they felt about John as a leader today. All said that they thought he had been fine.

They then discussed the story of the church builders. The teacher asked them why it was that the two girls who fed the camels had their names inscribed on the church.

John said, "Well, it was because they helped the poor tired camels and that was doing more than just giving money to have the church built."

Janet said, "Yes, because the camels are alive. They aren't just like machines."

The teacher asked the children if they should ever like to have charge of the chapel service. Since they seemed pleased with the thought, she asked what they would like to do. John said, "I think it would be interesting to show our frogs and pictures and to tell the others what we have been doing." The rest of the class agreed to his proposal.

Then followed the usual discussion of some episode in the week's experiences. John said, "I asked my mother a question last night and she told me to ask you today. I'm sort of afraid to ask it, though." Being assured that the class would be glad to hear his question, no matter what it was, he gained courage and said, "Well, is there any God?"

"I will turn the question over to you children. Do you think there is a God?" said the teacher thoughtfully.

"Yes, I think there is," said Ruth. "I think He is made of the spirits of all the dead people in the world."

"No, that couldn't be," said John, "because if there is a God He must have made people before any of them could die; so how could He just be the spirit of dead people?"

Although this rejoinder puzzled Ruth, she was still able to defend her thought. "Well, I think God is a spirit," she said, "and the spirits of people who die are what make Him keep growing."

"Well, I think there was a God in olden times," said Robert.

The teacher asked him if by that he meant that he didn't think there is one now.

"Well, we don't know whether there is one now or not. We read stories in the Bible about a God then that people were sure of, so there must have been one then, but today people aren't so sure, so how do we know?"

"Well, if it says in the Bible that there is a God, then there must be one," Elizabeth declared confidently.

"Is everything in the Bible true?" asked the teacher. Some of the children were emphatic in saying, "No." In fact no child thought that everything in the Bible is true.

At this point, the teacher went back to Robert's statement and explained to the children that for many centuries people have been asking John's question, "Is there a God?" In the olden times before people had any idea of how the world was made or what the laws of nature are, their answers to this question took the form of stories. The world seemed so wonderful a place to these people that they felt there must be a God who made it.

Here the teacher called attention to our present greater understanding of the world and how our growing knowledge had changed our ideas of God.

"Well, it seems as though there must be a God," said John, "when we see such wonderful things in nature."

The teacher asked if any of the things they had studied about the frogs and the birds made them feel that there is a God.

Jean said, "Well, of course, there is a God. He is a great spirit that makes everything grow. Think of a tree coming out of a tiny seed. There must be something that does those wonderful things."

Philip said, "Well, Jesus told us there was a God, too, and he lived close to him and must have known."

"Well, there was a God before Jesus came to the world," said Ruth.

"Jesus was pretty nearly like God, he was so good," added John.

The teacher asked the children if they felt that there was a spirit that we may call God wherever we see kindness and thoughtfulness in the world. She then explained to the children that each person in the world must work out his own idea as to what God is like, but that no one can be sure that his idea is the right one. "By talking such questions over together, as we are doing, perhaps we can help each other to a truer and fuller idea of God."

Some of the children had laughed a little at Ruth's idea of God as being the spirits of the dead. The teacher, therefore, took pains to point out that Ruth's notion that these spirits in going back into the infinite might be helping God to grow, was worth thinking about. Perhaps the world is developing and changing into something that had not been all thought out ahead, we cannot be sure. Ruth might be right. Why should it be so unthinkable that God himself is also really growing?

"My mother says there are angels that hover around my bed when I am asleep and take care of me," said Ruth.

"Oh, there couldn't be," objected John.

The teacher suggested that some people may like to imagine angels as being about us.

After this very interesting discussion, the children seemed to feel that there is a God who is a wonderful spirit making for growth and goodness in the world, but that no one really knows and that the mystery is part of the wonder of it all.

Since Thanksgiving was near at hand, the teacher suggested that they talk about what Thanksgiving meant to them.

John said, "To me it means giving food to the poor."

Janet said, "I always think of the Pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving." Then she told the story of how Thanksgiving came to be. Jean and Elizabeth said Thanksgiving always meant the Pilgrim story to them, too. Robert said he always thought of Columbus, how he discovered America and then how glad the Pilgrims were to have a new world to come to. Philip said, "Well, I think of the Pilgrims, too, and then I'm thankful I have food and clothes." Ruth said that she thought somebody years ago caught a wild turkey and made a feast out of it and that's what Thanksgiving meant to her,—"having turkey."

The teacher was much interested in the children's differing interests in Thanksgiving. She referred to John's idea about giving food to the poor as being one that grew very naturally out of the thought of Thanksgiving. We are so grateful for all that we have at Thanksgiving that we want to share with those who have nothing. She asked the children if they could think of other kinds of things that we might be thankful for—things that they could not see or touch.

Then she told two stories, one of a rich child who was very unhappy because his parents gave him no freedom to see the world for himself; the other, of a poor boy who was very happy because he was free to learn and to do things for himself. Quick to catch the meaning in the stories, the children discussed for some time the things that really make for happiness. Among these, freedom to make their own choices seemed to the minds of the children as a big thing to be grateful for, and they gave their parents credit for often giving them this freedom.

"My mother lets me make choices," said Janet, "but I always have a funny feeling inside if I don't choose the way she wants me to."

Jean said, "I always ask mother what she would do if she were a little girl."

The teacher asked the children to think of more things that they could be thankful for.

"Well, I'm glad I'm not a Negro," said Robert. "That is one thing to be thankful for."

When the teacher asked him why he felt this way, he said, "Because they have to work so hard, and I don't like to work."

"White people work, too," said John.

"Yes, I wonder if it is just because they have to work that you are glad you aren't colored," said the teacher. "All of us have often felt sorry for colored people. I wonder why?"

"It is because white people are so mean to them and make them keep off by themselves," Jean suggested.

Feeling that all the children had sensed this superior attitude of white people toward colored people, the teacher tried to tell a little of the story of the coming of the first colored people to this country as slaves and how white people had developed this habit of looking down upon colored people.

"Everybody is just as good as everybody else," said Janet. "It doesn't matter what color they are."

The teacher tried to point out that white people are responsible for the fact that many colored people are unfairly treated, and that in this is a challenge to us to try to make things better for the Negro. Robert said he agreed with the teacher, but, just the same, things being as they now are he was thankful he was not colored.

The forthcoming Thanksgiving service was discussed for a time. The children thought they would like to make up a song with their ideas in it of what they were thankful for. They also wished for a present-day Thanksgiving story.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The teacher made it a point to help the individual children to gain an honest understanding of themselves whenever occasion arose, as when she helped Philip to see the relation between his developing a hurt knee and his being beaten. (See Chapter on "Helping Children to Find Themselves," also the diary for the Eighteenth Sunday.)

After this interesting discussion on God, the teacher summed up the points the children had made, expressing appreciation of one idea which had been laughed at and adding her own point of view. She was eager that the children should feel their kinship with men through the ages in their seeking an answer to this question and at the same time that they should realize that a satisfying idea of God is too big to be completely grasped.

QUERIES

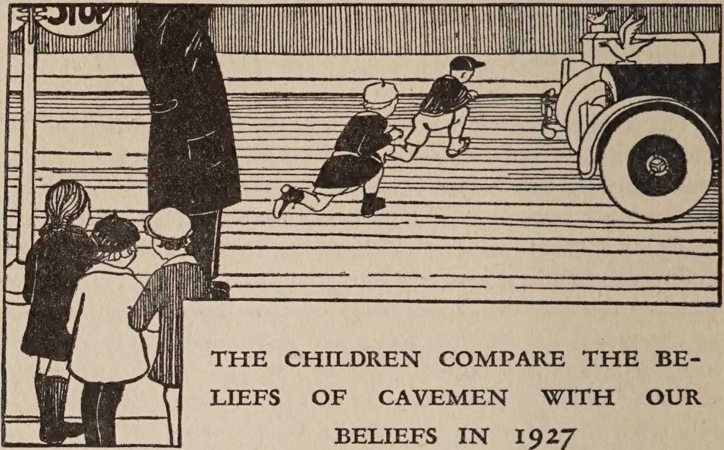
1. Was this a fitting time for a class discussion of tardiness? Have you ever asked your class what results follow from their tardiness?

2. Does the leader of your worship services, or your pastor in his children's sermons, ever use incidents reported from the children's own experiences? With what purpose? Can you see any value in doing so? Are cautions to be observed? (See the diary for the Seventh Sunday.)

3. Was the teacher justified in saying, "It isn't for me to make Robert stop?" What did she hope to accomplish? Was there any evidence of success?

4. Suppose the teacher by her attitude had led John to feel she was uneasy or shocked over his question about God, what would have been the result?

5. Suppose the teacher had given her own ideas about God first, would she have discovered the ideas of the children? Would she have helped them more or less?



THE CHILDREN COMPARE THE BELIEFS OF CAVEMEN WITH OUR BELIEFS IN 1927

Six children were present today and all but one arrived on time. As Miss Smedley found it more convenient to come to direct the hand-work at eleven, the opening period was spent in discussion.

The first suggestion came from Janet. She said she had something to tell that her mother had said after visiting the class last Sunday. Her mother felt that the children wriggled and moved about in a way that did not help the discussion. She had told Janet afterward that she hoped Janet would sit quietly when the other children tilted their chairs and wriggled. The teacher asked the children what they thought of the mother's criticism.

Jean said, "Well, I don't see why it isn't all right to wriggle around a little bit as long as you are listening and are interested. You can't just sit like a bump on a log all morning."

Philip said, "I think it's all right to move a little, too. You get awful tired of just sitting still every minute."

"It isn't courteous to be moving all around when people are talking," said Janet, taking her mother's side.

"You might disturb other people and keep them from hearing," added John.

The teacher asked if they felt that the way Robert and Philip had been folding and tearing paper the Sunday before was a good plan. The rest agreed that by doing so the boys had distracted the attention of the others. The teacher asked what they thought of deciding such matters as these according to whether or not the thing they were doing disturbed others or kept anyone from hearing what was going on.

"It's all right to move around a little," answered Jean. "We squirm sometimes when we are the most interested, but if we're doing anything that bothers people we had better not do it."

Janet then suggested having a question-box, such as the children in her brother's class had. Anyone who had a question to ask might write it out and put it in the box, and then the box could be opened at this period every Sunday. The other children were very enthusiastic about the plan and voted unanimously to put it into effect.

Philip said that after the discussion last Sunday on whether or not there is a God, he had asked his father where the first man came from. Since Philip thought the class might be interested in hearing, he told them his father had said that the first life on the earth was found in the sea and that the forms of sea life gradually changed. Certain fishes learned how to live on land, and so land animals appeared. Certain animals learned to fly, so birds appeared. Finally men who could walk on two feet and who could talk came to be.

"And that first man was Adam, and then Eve was made," said Jean. The teacher asked the children if they thought that there were no people in the world before

Adam and Eve. John said, "Well, history tells us that Adam was the first man, doesn't it? So he must have been the first one that really was a man."

Then the teacher again told the story of Adam and Eve and explained that very likely the story was a legend which the Hebrews told to explain how man first appeared in the world. She asked the children if they thought it was probable that God made a man out of clay and then breathed life into him.

Elizabeth said, "He probably could if He wanted to, but He wouldn't because that would be magic and there isn't any magic in the world."

The teacher asked the children if they didn't think a God who created this process of growth in the world seemed just as wonderful as one who would make Adam and Eve out of clay. They all agreed that nothing could be more wonderful than a God who could start such a marvelous process.

"I asked my mother this week if there was a God," said Elizabeth, "and she said, yes, she thought there was."

The teacher asked how many of them had been thinking about this question since last Sunday, and found that each child had been thinking about it and had in some way asked about it at home. The teacher then asked if they would like to hear a story about the cavemen and how they felt about God. Since the class seemed eager for this, she told of early cavemen who, not understanding the causes of rain storms and wind and lightning, were afraid and thought that evil spirits were plotting against them.[1] The picture was made vivid by putting the facts into a narrative of the life of one family whose cave was struck by lightning. In their fear and ignorance, the cave people brought offerings and made prayers to placate angry spirits and to beseech them for mercy. A story of a drought was also told. The teacher asked the children how things are different today.

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[1] See *This Believing World,* by Lewis Browne.

"We don't need to be afraid of a drought, for instance," said Jean, "because we have water in the ground and just pump it up when we need it."

The teacher asked how we knew enough to pump water up from the ground.

"Well, men have used their brains and have discovered that water may be stored in the ground," said John.

The teacher asked, "Why isn't it necessary for us to be afraid of God now?"

"We understand more about things now," said Philip, "and when we understand we can manage better."

Elizabeth asked, "Why didn't the cavemen use their brains and find out what to do instead of being scared?"

The teacher explained how they did begin to use their brains, in deciding to use caves to live in instead of just living out on the open ground, and in making earthen vessels to put water in when it rained. She tried to show how very gradual have been man's discoveries and how even the cavemen contributed to the knowledge that now we so easily take for granted. She told how helpless men had been in checking the recent flood in New England, in order to show that there is still much that we do not know.

John said, "And probably millions of years from now people will sit talking about what we believed in 1927 and will think all our ideas are just as queer as we think the cavemen's were because they were afraid of God."

The teacher expressed appreciation of John's idea. "What a great and wonderful world we live in! A world in which men may always grow and learn! What we believe today is no more final than what the first men believed."

The interest throughout this discussion was very keen. One child said at this point, "We think of God in a different way from those early people because we know more." The children seemed so interested in this question that the teacher planned to tell them a series of stories of different people's ideas of God.

At the chapel service today Mrs. Fahs, remembering the discussion of last Sunday, told stories pertaining to our ideas of God. She first used several of the clay frogs that the children had modelled to show what people can make, and then she held up a bunch of real roses to make the point that people can make many things but not anything that has life. The inference left with the children was that God is in the process wherever we find life.

Mrs. Fahs told also a Brazilian legend about the ant.[1] The ant finds that the snow holds his feet so fast he cannot move. In his search to find the source of the strength, the ant goes in succession to the snow, sun, cloud, wind, wall, rat, cat, dog, tiger, man and finally to God, who rewards him for being so industrious.

After chapel the children who had brought peanuts with them went over to the Columbia campus to feed the squirrels. There was a fine spirit in the group. Coming back, Jean ran ahead of the others and crossed the street without waiting for the leaders. As soon as we were back in our room Elizabeth said, "I think we should talk about that, it's dangerous."

"Well, you have to take chances," said Jean. "When I go to school in the mornings I dodge between autos all the time, otherwise I'd be late and get a tardy mark."

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[1] "Why the Ant is so Industrious," by Elsie Spicer Eels, *John Martin's Book,* January, 1916.

"Would you rather be dead than tardy?" asked John.

The teacher said that when Jean goes to school she is one person dependent only on herself, but that when she is in the group she is responsible not only to herself but also to the entire group of which she is a part. She asked Jean who she thought would be held responsible if some morning during recess she were killed.

"Why, the teacher would be responsible," replied Janet.

The teacher asked if a group could look after itself unless each one in it thought about the good of the group and acted accordingly. Jean agreed that her actions involved a good many people and said she would be careful another time.

A period of hand-work followed, during which Miss Smedley directed the work of modelling birds in clay. The children were intensely interested. Philip announced that his bird was the king of the birds. This was the third time this year that he had spontaneously used this pattern of behavior. The teacher recognized its significance.

After this the children discussed the chapel service and seemed very much impressed with the fact that Mrs. Fahs had worked out a service around the things that the class had been considering. They were delighted that she had shown their frogs.

John said, "You know, when she was talking I wanted to say that it just seems to us that God put a little seed of life in the world once and then *that* had other seeds that grew and *those* had more seeds, and this has kept on going until there's all sorts of things in the world, but always if you go back far enough, you come to God."

Jean said, "Yes, and not only in seeds and things that have life, but everywhere in the universe you see that God is working."

John went on to say, "Why, even in this clay that we work with we get back to God."

The teacher asked how. He said, "Well, God made us and the brains we have to think with when we use clay and He made the earth where we get the clay.

"In India," said Philip reminiscing, "we discovered a place in the side of a mountain where the soil was like clay and we did all kinds of things with it."

Janet said, "I liked the story Mrs. Fahs told about the ant. They all kept going back to God in that story."

"I liked what she said about the flowers the best," said Ruth, "but why couldn't man make flowers and put perfume on them and then wouldn't they be as good as real roses?"

The teacher asked the children what they thought. They said, no, they didn't think any flower could be made that would be as lovely as a real one.

Since the class had been asked to have a part in the primary Thanksgiving service, the children discussed their ideas. They decided to have one child tell about the first Thanksgiving. Then they wished to show the frogs and birds they had made and to have one child tell about them. The teacher asked what these plans had to do with Thanksgiving, and the children said that they thought that finding all this out about the way the universe works was something to be thankful for. Then at their own suggestion, they elected, by closed ballot, the two who should present these things at the Thanksgiving service. Janet was elected to tell the Thanksgiving story and Elizabeth to explain their work.

The teacher reminded them that they had decided to start the question-box the next week. Elizabeth said, "Well, I won't need to ask whether there is a God, because now I know there is."

"Well, I'd like to know how you know, even now?" asked John.

Elizabeth said, "Haven't we just thought and thought it out? And then my mother seemed sure."

"Well, you don't know really, that's what we're hunting to find out," said John wistfully.

The period closed with this challenge still before the group.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

Since John's interest in God seemed to be an interest common to the group and one that might lead on to a rich and rewarding study and investigation, the teacher took the initiative in planning a way to carry it forward. She spent a considerable amount of time, therefore, in preparing a story that would make concrete the ideas of God held by early cavemen and how they came to have these ideas. She had in mind a series of historical stories illustrating growth and change in men's interpretation of God. The teacher in situations of this sort was assuming the rôle of an executive in carrying out the children's ideas.

The interrelation of the various parts of the morning's program was constantly in the teacher's mind. The coöperation of the principal of the school in having the chapel services fit in with the children's interests was especially significant in this connection, as evidenced in this session. (See the diary for the Fourteenth Sunday.)

QUERIES

1. Is it worth while to keep on with the discussion of an apparently small behavior problem, such as tardiness? Why should this concern a Sunday school teacher?
2. What should be the teacher's attitude toward quoted com-

ments from parents with which she may not agree? Should she permit the children to criticize their parents?

3. Was the children's criterion for class behavior a workable one? Has your class ever developed such a standard?

4. Is it possible in following the regular Sunday school lessons to plan to leave room for special interests which appear in the class? What would happen were superintendents to encourage such initiative and independence? How might a superintendent help a teacher under such conditions?

THE CHILDREN PLAN FOR THANKSGIVING AND DISCUSS "LITTLE PEACE MAKERS"

THE children were all present today, but four of them were very tardy. In spite of the weekly discussions of this difficulty, it seemed to continue. The teacher felt that the parents would have to become interested in getting the children off on time if the problem were to be solved. So often the excuse given was a late breakfast, or having to go to buy a paper for father or some such reason.

During the hand-work period the children painted their clay birds. They were all so busy and interested in their work that little time was left for outside comment.

The chapel service was led by the teacher. She told a story of her own illustrating the interdependence of all living things in the universe, with God as the ultimate source. Her purpose was to create in the minds of the children a spirit of awareness and wonder toward the good things of life. The story was about Marjorie and her new blue coat. Somewhat condensed it was as follows:

One cold winter day when Marjorie came home from school and her mother presented her with a new blue coat, Marjorie said, "Oh, thank you, mother, for buying me such a nice warm coat for winter." Her mother said, "I don't deserve all the thanks because all I did was to give the money for it. If it were not for the man who keeps the store I never could have bought the coat." So the little girl said, "Please, mother, can't I go and thank the man at the store for selling such nice warm coats so that children won't be cold in winter?" Her mother said that some day she would gladly take Marjorie to town so that she might thank the man.

Not long after, Marjorie went with her mother to town and she thanked the storekeeper. "Well, well, little girl," said he, "if it hadn't been for the people in the factory who actually made these coats, I would never have had them to sell to little girls such as you, so you will have to carry part of your thanks to the workers in the factory."

Not long after, Marjorie's mother let her make a trip to a clothing factory. There Marjorie saw the workers making the coats and working at their machines. She was filled with even greater thankfulness because of all the work which, as she could see, had gone into the making of her little blue coat. When she told the factory manager, he said, "But how could we have made that coat for you if it hadn't been for the wool that the sheep gave me? They really deserve the most thanks of all."

It so happened that Marjorie's uncle owned a ranch and her mother promised that she and Marjorie would make a visit there very soon and thank the sheep, and her uncle would tell her all about how the wool was taken from the sheep to send to the factories.

Finally, the day came when Marjorie was watching the sheep on her uncle's ranch. She looked in amazement from the big shaggy gray sheep to the lovely smooth blue coat which she was wearing. Looking up at her mother, she said, "I never thought before how many people it takes to make all the nice things we have in the world." Then Marjorie said to the sheep, "Thank you, sheep, for sharing your wool with little girls so they can have warm winter coats." The sheep answered, "Baa, baa." Marjorie's mother thought perhaps they were saying that they didn't deserve all the thanks either because if it were not for God, the Creator, back of all the universe, there would never have been sheep with wool to share.

Marjorie went home after her visit, with many new things to think about and every time after that when she had any new things to wear or any good things to eat, she began to think of all the people and animals and of God who had had a share in making them possible for her.

After chapel the group went over to the Columbia campus for their recreation and there they played hide-and-seek to keep warm. The spirit in the group was exceptionally fine during the whole play period. John and Robert were the leaders today. When starting home Robert began to be mischievous and to stir up trouble.

John said, "We just won't have Robert lead if he is going to act silly and not really lead. Come on, Philip, you lead with me." So Philip took Robert's place. Robert, seeming not to mind, trailed along behind.

On returning to the classroom the children discussed the episode. Robert said, "I know I was bum. I felt like being that way."

"How was I after I got in?" asked Philip. "Oh, you were all right," answered Jean, and the others agreed. They spoke especially, also, of how carefully John had led them across the street.

The next period was taken up with further plans for the Thanksgiving service the next Sunday. The class decided to sing some song already available instead of making one up. "Let's sing, 'Come, Ye Thankful People, Come,' " suggested Philip. "Oh, yes," said Jean, "I know the first two verses of that by heart." "So do I," said Robert, who went downstairs and found a hymn book with that song in it.

Then the class went into a room where there was a piano and there they practised the song for a half hour. When they had finished practising Robert said, "Shall I type copies of that song this week so we'll all be sure to know the words next Sunday?" The teacher said that would be a fine idea.

Then the children worked on the speeches that were to be made the next Sunday. Janet, who had been appointed to tell the story of the first Thanksgiving, stood up and gave her story. The class followed with comments and suggested additional material which they felt she should include. Jean and Robert added certain facts to the story. Elizabeth said, "I think she should have talked louder."

Elizabeth then told of the work the class had been doing and the children decided that in the chapel each one should stand in the chancel, hold a piece of his hand-work, and explain a little about it. It took some time to work out these plans.

The last period was devoted to the question-box. Janet had a question this time. She said, "I want to know how we can be little peace-makers." The teacher said to Janet, "Just what do you mean by that?"

"When my brother snatches something away from me that is mine and that I am playing with," explained Janet, "what should I do?" This brought the problem into the realm of real life and the children took it up with much interest.

The teacher said, "What are some of the things you might do?"

"You could say, 'Please give it back,'" said Janet.

"Well, that doesn't work lots of times," said Ruth.

The teacher suggested that they state all the different things that might be done and then consider these to see which were the most effective.

Jean said, "Well, you could tell your mother on him."

"That's tattling and that's never a good thing to do," said Robert. "I think it's best to sock him one and grab it back. My mother says if I get into a scrap like that, not to tell on the boy but to sock him one and go on about my business."

"Listen to Robert," said Jean, "and all he ever does at school is to tell on people."

The teacher asked Robert about this and he said, "I know, but I try not to." There seemed an interesting bit of psychology here in the fact that Robert had condemned the failing that was evidently one of his own weaknesses. It was also interesting that when one of the children called the fact to his attention, he "owned up."

Ruth suggested, "You can cry and make them pity you."

The others all fell on this as a very poor device.

"It's terrible to use pity to get things," said Robert. "Once an old lady came around crying and asked my mother for some money and my mother said she was just using pity to get on in the world, and that isn't the right way to do."

"Well, what are you going to do when it's a person bigger than you that is picking on you?" said Ruth. "If I cry hard enough, my mother comes and just takes my sister by the hair and drags her upstairs, and gives me the thing she took."

John said, "I think that half the time people just treat you mean to tease you, and if they see it teases you, they keep it up, so that the best way to manage is not to let them know you care and then the fun for them is over and they just stop."

Jean said, "That was just it in the park this morning. When Robert saw it was bothering me the way he walked on the grass and didn't keep with us, the more we spoke to him, the more he dragged along behind."

Robert said, "I know it." The others agreed that what John said was true. The teacher said she thought it rather a good thing to remember.

Philip was then called on for his point of view and he said he thought to sock them one was the best.

"Oh, you are just copying Robert's point; why don't you have any ideas of your own?" John said.

"Well, I do know all kinds of things that I could do, but I don't have to tell you," said Philip.

"I should think people could talk the thing out and maybe settle it best that way," said Janet.

Out of all this discussion, the teacher brought up the six things mentioned as possible to do under these circumstances. (1) Ask the person to please give the thing back. (2) Tell your mother. (3) "Sock him one." (4) Cry and get pity. (5) Talk the thing out with the person. (6) Ignore him. In appraising the various methods, the children felt that the first way was not likely to work. The second they felt was a poor and cowardly way out. Robert held out to the end for the idea of "socking him one." He claimed it was effective when no other way worked. He said, "They don't try it again after you've done it once." The others agreed at the end that talking the thing out was the best way, all things considered. They felt, however, that it should be done with a feeling of strength and with sticking-up-for-your-rights in your voice.

QUERIES

1. Have you succeeded in securing prompt attendance on the part of your Sunday school pupils? This school had never given any prizes or rewards for promptness. Do you think this should have been done?

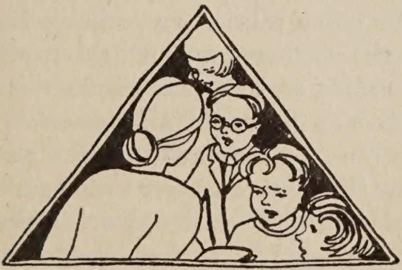
2. If children on occasion are to lead their own worship services, how much time would you expect them to give to planning for these? Would you expect them to copy the adult leaders they have heard or to plan something out of their own experience?

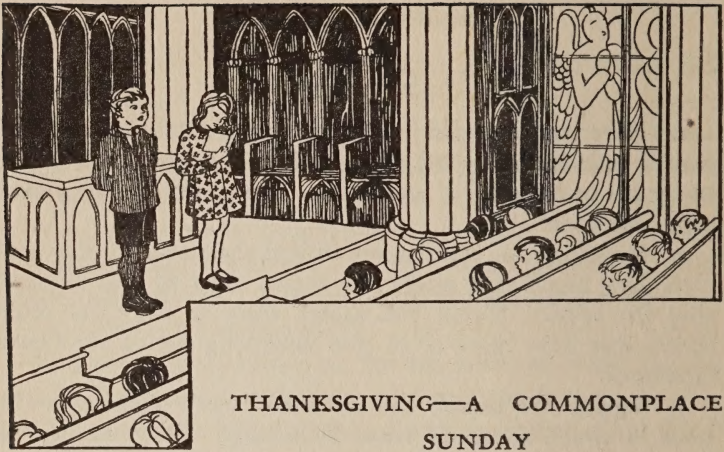
3. Suppose the teacher had discussed Janet's question in the form in which the child raised it, namely, "How we can be little peace-makers," what probably would have happened?

4. What do you think of deciding what is right to do on the basis of what works best?

5. Would it have been better if the teacher had expressed her own judgment, after summing up the various suggestions made by the children regarding the situation discussed?

6. Would you have used either Jesus' teaching about turning "the other cheek," or his casting out the money changers from the temple, or both incidents, in order to throw more light on the discussion?





THANKSGIVING—A COMMONPLACE SUNDAY

THIS was Thanksgiving Sunday. As the major part of the chapel service was to be given by the third-grade group, they spent the first period in going over the program. Only Philip and Ruth were absent and for the first time no one was late. There was one new pupil, Dorothy.

The primary chapel service was largely in the hands of the second- and third-grade classes. Janet told the story of the first Thanksgiving day. Elizabeth told about the nature study the class had been doing. Following this, each member of the class exhibited some piece of his work. There was also organ music. In addition the second grade presented to the Seminary a pencil sharpener. The attention to the service on the part of the third-grade group was not as alert as usual. The teacher felt that the children were so concerned about their own share in the program and how they would appear to the audience that they really got very little out of it. During the entire morning they did not come up to their usual fine level of work and thought.

Following the chapel service, the group joined the second-grade class for games. Since the day was rainy, the class had been especially invited to do this, and a good time resulted.

A period of discussion followed which amounted to little, because the children were not in the mood for it. Jean said, "I have a question. How did names first happen to come?" Robert said, "Well, in the beginning they just called people something like 'Laughing Boy' or 'Swift Foot' or anything that sort of described him." This satisfied Jean for an answer and there were no further questions. The teacher felt that there was a let-down feeling after the chapel service was over and a kind of inertia came over the children which to her was quite understandable.

After this the class discussed plans for Christmas. They all agreed that they would like to help someone. Janet said, "Can't we give toys to poor children?" "Or maybe to sick children," added Jean. "I think it would be nicer to give things to orphans because they haven't any mothers or fathers," said Robert. Dorothy agreed. "I do, too, because that is worse than being sick." "Let's give them the money from our collection," volunteered Jean, "because they know better what they want than we do."

The children finally voted to help orphans by buying toys for them and also by giving them the money from the class collections. Robert volunteered to find out about some orphans who could be helped and to report on them the next Sunday. The children seemed to be much interested in thinking about Christmas plans.

In the hand-work period which followed, the children drew crayon pictures that represented to them the Christmas spirit. Everyone drew a Christmas tree except Robert, who drew Santa Claus in a sleigh and driving his reindeer.

All the drawings were very conventional except John's. He drew a "living" tree with colored candles and ornaments on it and had it growing on a hillside against a night sky with a full moon showing. In telling about his picture John said he always thought of all the poor trees that were cut and how much pleasanter it would be if they could all be "living" trees.

While the children were working the teacher asked them how they would like to have more stories of people living at different times and having different ideas of God. Perhaps by Christmas they might have a story about Jesus and His idea of God. She suggested that they might model a nativity scene for their hand-work during this month, and that after Christmas they might go on with the nature work. All were unanimous in saying they would like to make a nativity scene provided Miss Smedley did not think it would be too difficult.

Then by invitation the second-grade group came in to spend the last fifteen minutes in examining the hand-work at closer range. This proved to be an enjoyable experience to everyone.

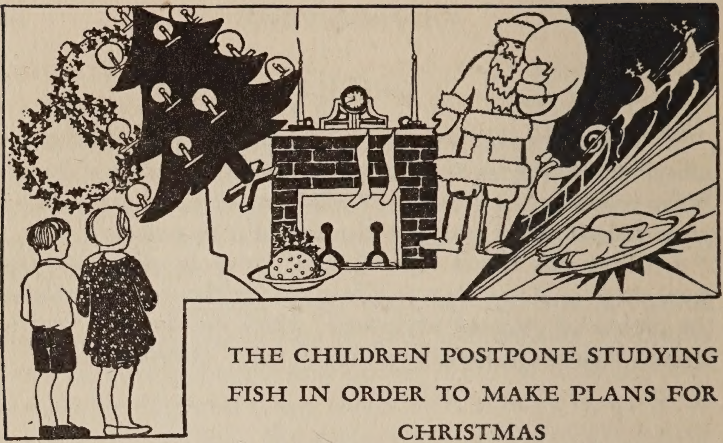
COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The children were so concerned about the impression they were going to make in the chapel service that the real meaning of Thanksgiving seemed to escape them. They were somewhat nervous and tired after the experience, and the teacher realized on such an occasion the futility of expecting the usual high-grade discussions.

QUERIES

1. Has any group in your school presented to the Sunday school or church equipment purchased with its own funds? What values to the group itself might be expected from such a presentation? How and by whom should it be received?

2. Have you found "special days" with an all-school program such as Rally Day or Christmas helpful or otherwise in the process of religious education? Have you found a way to interest children in something beyond mere "showing off."



THE CHILDREN POSTPONE STUDYING FISH IN ORDER TO MAKE PLANS FOR CHRISTMAS

ALL the six children who were present this morning arrived on time except Dorothy, who said that their clocks at home were wrong and she didn't know what time it was.

John brought in two pictures of fish which he had drawn the night before. He said he knew some interesting things about them which he would like to tell the class. One was a picture of a brook trout and the other was of a torpedo fish. The children were very much interested in the pictures. John said, "The interesting thing about this torpedo fish is the way he protects himself. If any big fish comes around to bother him he gives him a regular electric shock. He lives around South America somewhere."

"I have a book at home with everything about fish in it. I'll bring it sometime," suggested Dorothy.

"Well, if a king-fisher should start to eat a torpedo fish, would he give the bird an electric shock?" asked Ruth.

"He would if the king-fisher got that near him," answered John, "but these fish live in the bottom of the ocean and king-fishers can't go that deep for fish."

The teacher asked, "How would you like to study fish next in our nature work?" This suggestion met with enthusiasm from every child. John said, "We finish our birds today so can we begin on fish next Sunday?" The teacher said, "We must talk over our Christmas plans and see whether we want to be doing something for Christmas next week or whether we want to start on our study of fish."

John said, "I vote we start on fish. I think these holidays are an awful interruption to our work. It's such a waste of time to just do something because it happens to be a holiday."

"I think we ought to do something for Christmas next week," insisted Jean, "and then begin on fish after Christmas. "So do I," echoed Elizabeth and Dorothy. Ruth said, "I have to be absent next week so I'm glad if you wait to begin fish until I get back." Finally the class became unanimous in deciding that the study of fish should wait until after Christmas. John was very good humored about being over-ruled.

The children made nests for their birds out of excelsior which Miss Smedley had dyed for them. The children colored their own clay eggs, thus finishing up the bird work. They worked hard and the room was in quite a mess when they had finished. Although they had no brooms, everybody pitched in vigorously to clean up the room.

At the primary chapel service, the children began learning a Christmas carol, "The Friendly Beasts," new to most of them.

Since a large number of the children in the school had talked in vague terms about giving their money to the poor, the teachers had decided at staff meeting that it would be helpful if some speaker could be found who could tell in a sympathetic and appreciative way some true stories of poor families whom she had really known. "Poor people" needed to be brought to life for the children in the form of real human folks. Fortunately, we were able to find Miss Jean Lyon who, for a year or more, had been visiting homes of need for the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor and had made friends with some unusual fathers, mothers and children who were struggling with poverty. Miss Lyon told simply and vividly the story of the G. parents and their five children. She had brought with her big red stockings with the names of definite children on them and suggested that each class if they wished might take a stocking to fill. The children seemed deeply impressed by these stories.

Following chapel, the group went over to the campus for their recreation. It was a cold snowy day and they were having such fun playing stoop-tag that they did not want to return. On the way back they began throwing snow at each other, but everyone took it in good part.

A period of discussion of Christmas plans followed. The class decided to fill the stocking for Doris, a nineteen-months-old baby, in the G. family for their Christmas work.

John said, "I think it is nice to take a baby. Let's take the youngest one." "I do, too," said Jean. "I have a baby at home, so maybe mother would have things I could bring."

The teacher asked them what plan they wished to follow in spending their money. Did they wish to meet and buy the things together, or to appoint a committee to do the buying, or to divide the money up so that each one might spend a certain amount. Jean said, "I think we had better all go together so we won't get the same things." Since this met with the approval of the other children, the class decided to go together on Saturday afternoon for the purchases and then to use the hand-work period the following Sunday for wrapping the things up and putting them into the big red stocking.

Then the teacher raised the question of a Christmas party for the primary children. Usually this party had been held on a Saturday morning. Someone had suggested that this year the primary children might have their Christmas party on a Sunday morning. The teacher asked the children which they would prefer. The class thought that the Sunday party would be fine.

In the story hour following this discussion, the teacher told the children how people came to worship fetishes and to depend on charms. She told how men began wearing various objects around their necks, such as tiger's teeth to give them courage, so that they were no longer afraid. She told how when these simple people failed to be courageous after wearing the charm they would blame the charm and throw it away.[1] The teacher asked whether men think differently today.

Jean said, "Well, we don't think you can get brave that way. It has to be inside of you."

"It was silly for them to blame the tooth if they weren't brave," said Ruth. The teacher asked if today we ever blame other people sometimes when things are really our own fault. "Goodness, yes," Dorothy said. The teacher suggested that we might check ourselves up at this point.

"Yes, and there are lots of people today who are superstitious, too," said John. "My grandmother says you have to kill a pig in the right time of the month or you won't get any lard."

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[1] See *This Believing World*, by Lewis Browne.

The teacher agreed with John that we have many superstitious ways even today when we should know better. She also asked the children to consider how we ought to meet a situation which is difficult. She said, "Take the recent flood in New England, for instance. Did people wear little umbrellas around their necks to ward off the rain? What did they do?" Jean said, "Why, they just began to think what they could do."

The teacher said that was exactly the difference between ancient and modern ways and that it was interesting to see the way men's minds have grown, that at first men were just afraid, and threw up their hands in despair. Then they began to use their minds and tried to work a way out. To invent fetishes to help cope with the spirits was a beginning. Learning has gone on and on until today we have so much knowledge at our command that we can often think our way out of situations just by making use of all we know.

The children were eager to go on with this discussion and did not wish to stop to talk over Christmas plans with the second-grade group. As they had made the arrangements earlier in the morning, however, they went at this time into Miss Mattison's room, where the two classes discussed plans. The children decided to appoint committees to arrange for the Christmas party. They decided on a program committee, a decoration committee and a refreshment committee, and at once elected the committee members, one child from each class being on each committee. John was elected for program, Dorothy for decoration, and Elizabeth for refreshments. The committees decided to meet at nine the next Sunday in order to complete plans.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

John's special interest in fish, which he had communicated to the rest of the group, the teacher decided to take advantage of, knowing that learning best takes place where there is interest. The acceptance of this lead, however, caused another shift in the plans she had been making.

QUERIES

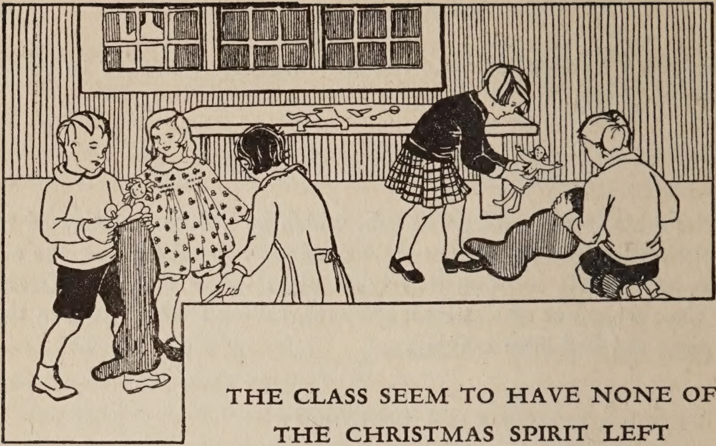
1. Do you think the teacher was justified in paying so much attention to John's fish?

2. Should it be possible for Sunday school classes to give to definite individuals or should they give to "the poor" or to "missions" or to "the church"? What are the relative values for children in the two types of giving? Which is better for the recipients of the gifts?

3. Should religion help children to meet the difficult situations arising in their own experiences? How?

4. Do children enjoy a party more if they plan it themselves? Is it thereby a more educative experience?

5. The children elected three committee members to do particular and immediate jobs. At the beginning of the year they had elected three officers who had never had much to do. In Sunday school classes of young children, is it better to encourage organization to meet particular needs or to have permanent class officers?



THE CLASS SEEM TO HAVE NONE OF THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT LEFT

FIVE children were present and all arrived on time. Philip was absent on account of illness. The children decided to make him some Christmas books today. John and Elizabeth, who were on committees for the Christmas party, both arrived early, but Dorothy, who was also on a committee, did not come at all.

During the hand-work period, the children wrapped the Christmas presents they had brought for Doris, the baby about whom Miss Lyon had told last week. On Saturday, John and Jean had gone with the teacher at the appointed time to do the buying. The rest of the class who did not appear gave various reasons for their failure to come. Robert had gone skating with his father. Janet had to go downtown with her mother, and Elizabeth had forgotten.

John and Jean reported on their purchases, which included stockings, mittens, a sweater, bibs, a rattle, a duck, a doll, and blocks. Though the teacher had made a few suggestions, the choices had been made by the children. The money used was from their collection and amounted to $5.38. This morning they did all the wrapping and filling of the stocking and wrote the list of things to pin on it. For some reason they quarreled a good deal over the wrapping of the presents. After finishing this piece of work they made little Christmas cards out of red paper to give to the children in the Union School kindergarten the next Sunday.

While the children were working, Elizabeth said, "You know I didn't used to think there really was a Santa Claus until a few years ago when I was out in New Jersey for Christmas and I woke up early Christmas morning and looked out the window and I saw him jumping over a tree in the yard. Ever since then I have known there was a Santa."

"Oh, there is not a real Santa Claus," said John, "you were just seeing things."

"Of course there's not, it's just a Christmas legend," said Robert positively.

"Well, I didn't think there really was one," Janet said, "but if Elizabeth really saw him then I believe it."

Jean said, "I don't think there is one. I think he's just the spirit of Christmas." The teacher asked Elizabeth what Santa looked like. She said he had whiskers and red cheeks and looked just like the pictures. The teacher asked, since it was very early in the morning, if maybe she had been dreaming. "No, I was very wide awake," Elizabeth insisted.

When the pictures were finished Janet said, "Which one do you think is the prettiest, Mrs. Sweet?" Robert spoke up very quickly, "That's a greedy question for Janet to ask. She thinks hers is the best and she just wants to have you say so." The teacher said that the pictures were all different and each one was very pretty.

During this time John was working on a big picture of

Santa Claus to be used in connection with a game for the Christmas party. The children were critical of the way in which he was doing it.

"That sack looks like an old stocking," said Jean.

"Those toys look as if they were just in the air," said Robert.

The teacher felt that some of this criticism might have been due to jealousy on the part of the children who were not doing a special piece of work of their own such as John was doing. The criticism, however, was not limited to John's drawing. Robert said of one child's Christmas card when she had finished it, "Your card is better looking on the back than it is on the front." Jean said, "Robert is always saying nasty things like that to everybody. I suppose he is just made that way and can't help it."

Since Jean had been somewhat inclined to make cutting remarks herself during the morning, the teacher said, "Well, what about your saying a thing like that about Robert, Jean? Are *you* just made that way, too?"

"Of course, people aren't made that way," spoke up John. "They can't get out of it that easy. They just want to be nasty and so they are."

Following this period, the class joined the second-grade group for singing and practised the carol, "The Friendly Beasts." This singing took the place of the regular chapel service.

The class then went over to Riverside Drive and played hide-and-seek. During this period Robert teased the girls a good deal until they were all complaining of him. It was quite apparent to the teacher that Robert was enjoying the fun of seeing how easily he could annoy the girls.

When the children returned to the classroom the teacher suggested that they talk things over. She opened the discussion by asking what they thought of the spirit in the group this morning and whether they were talking so much about the Christmas spirit that they had none of it left among themselves.

Janet spoke up. "Well, I have been good all the morning so I haven't anything to say." It was true that Janet had been very nice during the morning, though it was rather a "teacher's-pet" type of goodness which she had displayed.

"Well, it's fun to tease, that's why I do it," admitted Robert. The teacher asked him if he could tell just what the fun was so that the others, too, might sometimes try it. He said, "It's fun to know you are getting somebody's goat like that. Just the feeling of knowing you are teasing is lots of fun."

Jean said, "Well, it's a horrid way to be."

"Listen to Jean," Elizabeth retorted, "and she was putting snow down my neck to make me mad all the time. She's just as bad as Robert."

"Well, if I did I didn't mean to," said Jean in defense.

"Oh, you did, too, and you know you did," said Elizabeth.

The teacher said it was a surprise to her to see the group acting this way. She said that she had often felt they were so united that they were like one person, but that today they seemed like five different people all pulling in opposite directions, and it was strange that they should be like this at Christmas time when they were working so hard to do things for other people.

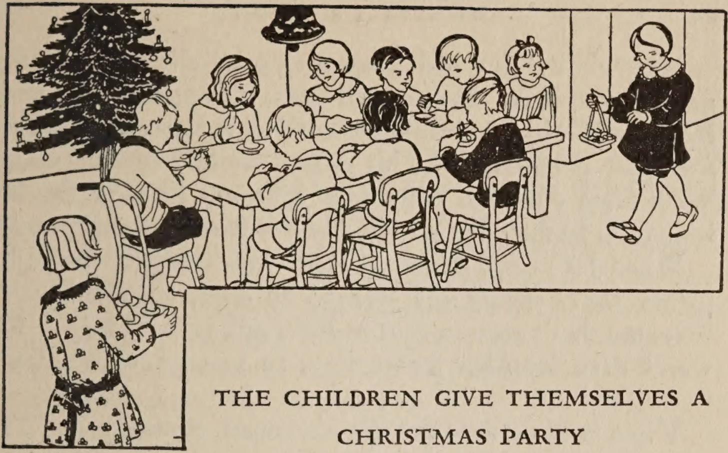
After this the teacher told a Christmas story called "The Stranger Child." The children's attention was perfect, and they discussed the story afterwards with apparent interest. The teacher asked if they had any Christmas stories they would like to tell, and Jean told one about Hans and Gretchen.

The last period was spent in making Christmas books for Philip, who had been ill for two weeks. The children made several attractive books and wrote messages on them. Janet volunteered to deliver them to Philip on her way home.

There had been no high spots this Sunday, and the group seemed incapable of rising to their usual level. The teacher purposely did not carry the discussions very far for it was apparent that the children were not in the mood for objective, constructive discussion.

QUERIES

1. Was there a reason for the children's quarrelsomeness? If so, what was it? Or were they simply possessed today with a selfish nature that cannot be accounted for? Does John's remark the previous Sunday regarding holidays seem at all significant?
2. Was the teacher justified in calling attention to their selfish attitudes as definitely as she did? Do you think that on this occasion she excused the children too easily?
3. What does your class do for sick or absent members? Have you deliberately planned to make use of such situations for religious education?
4. When the members of the class draw or bring in pictures, or collect other things for display, do you seek to avoid praising one child above another? If so, why?



THE CHILDREN GIVE THEMSELVES A CHRISTMAS PARTY

THIS was the day of the Christmas party, which the second- and third-grade classes gave themselves in the classroom of the younger group. The entire party was in the hands of the committees of children. Every member of the third-grade class was present, including Philip, who had returned after three weeks of illness. Elizabeth, who was chairman of the decoration committee, arrived early with Christmas paper and napkins for the table and a fancy center-piece and various other Christmas things with which to decorate the room. She went about her work with great efficiency and insisted on the teacher's leaving the room, since she said she could manage alone, and anyway she wanted the teacher to be surprised. So Elizabeth and the representative from the second grade were left alone in the room to arrange the decorations, the cookies, candy, plates and everything needed for the party. When all things were ready and the teacher was ushered in, she found that every detail had been carried out efficiently and well. She thought Elizabeth had done a very creditable piece of work.

Meanwhile John had been acting as chairman of the games committee. He also had taken his responsibility very seriously and had arrived early with all the necessary equipment for the games that his committee had decided upon. With some direction from Miss Mattison he took the initiative in leading the games, and did it exceptionally well.

When Jean tried to get into the room where the refreshments were, saying she wanted to help, Elizabeth said, "No, we don't want a soul in here, not even to help. We won't even let Mrs. Sweet stay, so you know we don't want you."

When it came time for the ice-cream, Robert said, "I'm sorry I can't have any because my mother doesn't want me to eat between meals." He sat apart from the group while they ate and seemed quite content not to participate.

At eleven o'clock the junior department gave a Christmas play, "The Christmas Candle," by Elsie Carter. This was a dramatization of a German legend of the Christ child, who on Christmas Eve appeared as a waif begging for food and shelter. He was finally welcomed in a simple cottage, where the widowed mother had been feeling sad because she had no gifts for her two children. This family shared all they had with the stranger and later realized that they had entertained the Christ child. The play was acted by the children with a rare degree of fine feeling. It became for the junior and high school departments a dramatic expression of their own intense feelings over the real "poor children" for whom each class had been buying gifts.

The third-grade children were invited to see the play and liked it, although they did not catch the significance which it had for the older children.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

When definite responsibility was assigned to certain children, as had been done in preparing for the Christmas party, the teacher withdrew as a prop to lean upon in order that the children's sense of responsibility might be truly developed.

This was the first time that the primary department's Christmas party had been given on a Sunday morning. It was suggested that this be done because there were unusual circumstances which made a week-day party impracticable. No parent or child, so far as the teacher knows, raised a question regarding the fitness of these activities on Sunday.

QUERIES

Is it to be considered a demonstration of religious growth when children carry responsibility as well as these committee chairmen did? Conversely, should it be a matter of concern to their Sunday-school teacher if they do not have an opportunity so to do?

THE CHILDREN UNTANGLE A MESS. FROM STAR FISH, SEA URCHINS AND PRIMITIVE MAN THEY DISCUSS GOD

On the morning of December 13th, the high school department had given a dramatization of Tolstoi's *Where Love Is There God Is Also.* This had been given at 9.15 especially for the parents, while the play given by the junior department had been at eleven o'clock and all the children from the third grade and over had been invited. Because of the special request of the children of the junior department, who had been disappointed in not seeing the high school play, it was repeated this Sunday morning, and the third-grade class were invited.

Every child attending was on time today. Janet was the only one absent and her brother said she was sick. There was a new member, Grace, who came for the first time, and James was a visitor. The children of the third grade enjoyed the high school play very much, and after it was over discussed it all the way back to their room. Jean said, "I think the Christ child was really the boy without a coat. What do you think?" The teacher said she thought that he was each of the people who came to the cobbler's shop. In helping each one, the cobbler was showing the spirit of Christ.

The children were surprised and delighted today to find that they were to have a new classroom, a professor's office on the fifth floor. The teacher explained that they had been asked to move up since some of the other classes had grown so large that the school needed more space downstairs.

At a previous meeting John had brought pictures of fishes and the class had voted to take up a study of these after Christmas. Accordingly, a study of sea life was begun. John had brought a great number of books which he had received for Christmas, including Edith Patch's *First Lessons in Nature Study,* and also a number of booklets on birds, insects and mammals. The teacher told the children she had some interesting things to tell them about star-fishes and sea anemones and suggested that each child during the hand-work period might draw something that lived in the sea. John drew a whale; Philip, an octopus; and Robert, a group of sea animals, including a spear-fish, star-fish and eel. The other children drew star-fishes.

As they worked it was interesting to note the attitude of the class toward Grace, the newcomer. At first she seemed a little quiet and shy. Robert said, "You can use these crayons, go on and draw!" "I don't know what to draw," she said timidly. "Well, I'll show you how to draw an eel, or a star-fish if you want me to," suggested Robert, and in a fine spirit he showed her. She soon warmed up to the class and was as busy as the others. All the children seemed especially solicitous of her, keeping her supplied with crayons and watching to see that she had something to do.

When the children had finished their drawings, they held them up for everyone to see. Then the teacher asked John if he would like to show the children the books he had brought. He stood up and asked the group which they preferred, to hear a story out of one book or to see pictures. They voted to see pictures. Then he asked which pictures they wanted to see, insects, mammals or birds. They voted for mammals. Then John said, "Do you all know what mammals are, in the first place? In case you don't, one thing about them is they always have milk for their young. That's a thing to remember." Then he exhibited his booklets, each telling something about one animal, such as a dog, a bear, or a fox.

Following this hand-work period, the children went out-of-doors for their recreation. After leaving the classroom, they separated, some going downstairs by foot and others using the elevator. By the time the teacher reached the foyer, Robert and John were the only children in sight. John said that the rest were hiding. There were sounds of scuffling feet, and hats came falling from the balcony. Someone had knocked down the school blackboard in an effort to hide behind it. Finally the children were gathered together once more, some having come up from the basement, and others having appeared from their hiding places in the balcony and from down the corridors.

At last, as the class started out of the door together, the teacher suggested that they go over to the campus to talk things over before they did anything else. When they were all seated on a bench, the teacher said, "We seemed to have had some difficulty today in getting started. Let us think over everything that has happened since we left our classroom a little while ago."

"Well," said Robert, "nobody stayed together and so nobody got to the lobby at the same time and then some of the children thought it would be smart to hide and it made us all late in getting out."

"Yes," added John, "and they all got so excited trying to hide that Elizabeth knocked the bulletin board down and broke it."

"And it made it awfully noisy all around," said Ruth. "I saw people looking at us."

The teacher then said, "Let us think of all that has happened as a result of these things."

"Well, that noise probably disturbed people," Ruth said.

"It kept the whole class from getting out to play early," said Robert.

"It is taking time now to talk it over, too," added Jean; "why don't we wait and talk it over when we get back?"

The teacher said, "I feel that it is important enough to talk over now, and that something must be decided so that it won't happen again." She asked the children what they thought. They agreed it was better to talk it out right there.

Then the teacher asked, "When do you think that the actual play should begin, the minute we leave the room or not until we reach the place where we are going?" Jean said, "Well, it ought not to begin until we get to the place we are going." The teacher asked why.

"Well, if each of us just goes along thinking of his own pranks," said John, "we're likely to get run over by autos and everything."

Philip added, "Yes, and we waste time unless we go like a group because we scatter and get into an awful mess."

"Well, I feel that it was really my fault this morning because I should have suggested that we appoint leaders," said the teacher. "I think we had better do it now to see that we get back safely. How do you want to choose them?"

Robert said, "I think that John and I had better lead back because we were the only two who were responsible even when we weren't told to be. I think we could probably do it best today."

"I don't," said Jean emphatically. "That is just why they shouldn't. It would be better to make someone a leader who wasn't any good and see if he could change and be responsible."

Robert said, "Oh, Jean, you are just saying that because you want to lead; you know you are."

"I am not," said Jean with a good deal of emotion in her voice. The teacher asked Jean to think a minute and see if maybe that reason hadn't entered in. "Well, I think to choose by initials would be the best way," she replied.

It was obvious that Robert had seen through Jean's motive. The teacher felt that Jean had admitted the charge to herself. There was, therefore, no need to press the point. "Who do you think would be good leaders going back, Grace?" asked the teacher. Grace said, "Robert and John because they have shown that they can take care of themselves even without leaders."

Ruth and Philip also agreed to this. Elizabeth felt that it would be better to elect some who needed the training. There was finally a majority vote for the two boys.

Just enough time was left for a game of hide-and-seek, and then the class had to go back to their room. Having the play-time cut off by their dawdling seemed to have been the worst consequence the children could think of. They talked about it all the way back.

When the class were settled in the classroom, the teacher asked what method they would like to follow in the future for their leadership. Jean said, "Let's go by initials and have each pair lead two weeks in succession." The children agreed to this and worked out a schedule. A leader's responsibility was to include getting the group to and from chapel, as well as to and from the place of play.

The story hour followed this discussion. The teacher first told about the habits of the star-fish and its power to drop off one of its points if attacked by a crab or some other enemy. This is done without permanent injury to the star-fish since the point will grow in again. The teacher then told how sea anemones give off a stinging poison if anything bothers them and how they can spread themselves over rocks and change their color to match the rock if a large sea animal comes after them.

"What an interesting life!" exclaimed Robert.

The teacher told also how sea urchins hide under piles of pebbles when they want to sleep, so that crabs can't find them. The children were fascinated by these stories. The teacher asked them what they would do if they were in danger.

"If a tiger came after me I'd climb a tree," said Robert; "but if a bee came after me to sting me I'd stand perfectly still."

John said, "If I got lost I'd go and tell a policeman."

"My sister wouldn't because she is scared of policemen," said Ruth.

"Well, if somebody came after me I'd get a gun and shoot him," asserted Philip.

The teacher asked if any of the ways of the sea animals were like the children's own ways of protecting themselves.

"With animals they seem to have just one thing to do," said Jean, "but with us we just use our heads and it may be a different thing we do for everything."

The teacher enlarged upon Jean's thought that man had capacities for coping intelligently with his environment. It is worthy of remark that in this discussion no child mentioned praying or calling on God in any way nor did any child mention going to his parents for protection.

"Do any of you know children who when they are in need of protection, go to their parents?" asked the teacher.

"Sure, loads of them do," said Robert in disdain, "but it's babyish."

"Well, it's silly to depend on your parents too much because they'll die before you do and if you haven't yourself to lean on what'll you do then?" was John's direct reply. "And anyway you may just get them in danger, too, by running to them."

"Well, I think I'd go to my father, because fathers are stronger than mothers," said Elizabeth.

Ruth said, "You might go to a sister."

"I think it's better to use your head because you always have it with you," said Jean.

Finally the discussion brought the children back to their idea of God.

"To begin with," said Philip, "everything was in the ocean and whoever made the world fixed it so all these things could protect themselves some way, so life wouldn't just die out in the world."

Robert took up the argument. "Sure," he said, "and so God really made guns, too, because if he started all this idea of animals having some way to protect themselves and then made it so people began to use their heads, why He really made guns because He fixed it so man could think to make a gun."

"How do you know God started all this?" asked Ruth.

"We don't really," admitted John.

The teacher said that people had come to use the term God for the one who is back of all this wonderful universe. She explained that no one is sure just what He is like, but that most people believe there must be some great power that puts life into the world, and men have come to call this power God.

At this point in the discussion, the teacher asked the class if they would like to have her tell them more about how the primitive people felt about God. The children were eager for this and began reviewing what had previously been told them. They remembered the stories in sequence very well, beginning with the idea of fear and then leading up to the supposition of spirits in things, the desire to placate these spirits, the development of fetishes and lucky stones to ward off evil, and then on to idols and churches. The teacher was impressed to find how clearly the children had come to grasp these ideas. She told a story of life during the period when men had become tillers of the soil, indicating how closely their religion was bound up with their farming, so that they had seasonal worship festivals and made offerings to bring rain and prosperity. One picture in Mr. Browne's book, *This Believing World,* was of a man crouching in fear and hiding his eyes in the face of a storm with lightning in the sky.[1]

"My goodness, we don't hide any more," said Jean. "We discover electricity from the lightning and use it."

"Well, some people still hide," insisted Robert.

"They don't need to if they use their heads," said Jean.

The teacher again tried to point out what progress people were making even in those days in their effort to understand how God worked in the world. She thought it was interesting to find out that the better man came to understand the world, the more friendly he thought it was.

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[1] See *This Believing World,* by Lewis Browne.

Robert said, "The way to find the world a friendly place is to be friendly yourself." The teacher said she thought this was a very good point.

Grace had been rather quiet during the morning. The teacher wondered a little how she was taking these very frank discussions. Her father told the teacher afterwards that Grace said she loved the school, that it was much better than the country Sunday school she used to attend.

QUERIES

1. How would you account for the attitude of the children toward Grace, the new pupil?

2. Was the loss of playtime a sufficient punishment for the disturbance which preceded? Was it a punishment?

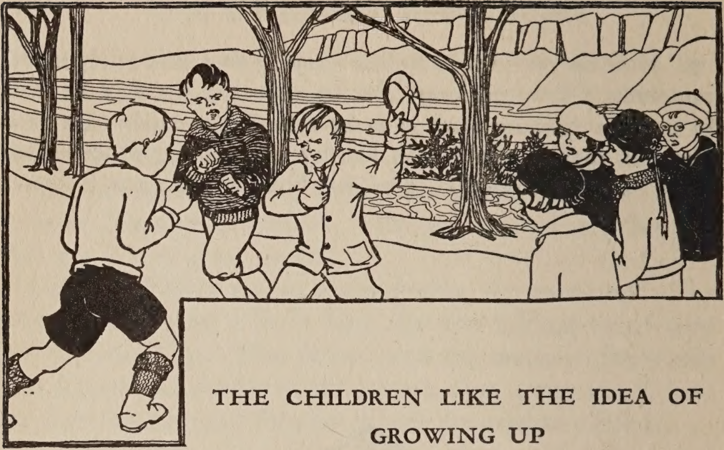
3. Why did none of the children "mention praying or calling on God in any way" to help them out of difficulties? Was it lack of experience, or of wise teaching about what prayer really is for? Should the teacher have opened the way for a discussion of the values in prayer? If so, how?

4. When the teacher gathered the class together in the park to talk matters over, she asked two major questions, without blaming anyone for what had happened. What did those two questions accomplish?

5. Did the teacher gain or lose by saying, "I feel it is really my fault this morning"? Was it her fault?

6. Today Ruth asked "How do you know God started all this?" She was the one who had said on the Sixth Sunday, "My mother says that there are angels that hover around my head when I am asleep and take care of me." What has happened to Ruth? Are you fearful for her?

7. How do you explain Robert's saying that God really made guns while a few moments later he said that the way to find the world a friendly place is to be friendly yourself? Do you remember that on the Eighth Sunday the solution he defended was to "Sock them one"? What has been happening to Robert?



THE CHILDREN LIKE THE IDEA OF GROWING UP

SEVEN children were present today, including Grace, who had come for the first time the previous Sunday, and James, a new boy who had visited the class the Sunday before. Janet and Ruth were absent.

Because of the progress which the children of the class had shown throughout the first term, because of the ability displayed in their discussions, and also because they had appreciated so much the few times when they had been with the older children in chapel, the principal of the school decided to promote the class to the junior department.

This Sunday morning, therefore, the class joined the junior department for the chapel service. This came at 9.15 and was led by Mrs. Fahs. She told the children a number of incidents which had happened in various classes, changing the children's names, altering situations a little, and not stating the children's ages. She pictured occasions when the children had faced up to situations in a grown-up way in contrast to those when they had acted more as babies and when the teachers had treated them accordingly. Throughout the series of incidents, she introduced an interesting terminology, using "childish" and "grown-up" to represent what in other days had been called being "bad" or "good." One of the stories showed how one group had greeted a new pupil cordially and thoughtfully and had made her feel at home and how another group were snobbish to a newcomer and had made her dislike the school so that she never came again. Another set of stories presented two cases of disorder. In one story, the children purposely competed with the teacher to see how much power over him they could achieve. In the other, the class thoughtfully considered what had happened and worked their way out to self-control. After each set of stories Mrs. Fahs asked the question: Which of these children do you think were the older, the more grown-up?

Following chapel, the children had a period of handwork with Miss Smedley. They modelled star-fish in clay and worked with much interest. Philip made an octopus, but all the others made star-fishes. Robert had brought a dried star-fish from home which gave the children a good model. They applied themselves to the work rather closely so that there was little conversation. At one point Philip snatched one of the legs off Robert's star-fish and said, "I'm a crab eating you, you'd better snap off that leg and grow another." Robert took the joke in good part and molded another leg to take the place of the missing one.

Following this the children returned to their room and had a discussion of the chapel service. The teacher said, "Well, how did you enjoy being in the junior department today?" They all answered at once that it was fine and they liked it much better than being with the younger children. The teacher then asked them what part of the service they liked. Grace said, "I liked the music."

James, the newcomer, said, "I liked the stories."

"Some of those stories were about us," said John.

"I know it," added Robert. "She called me Jimmie in one place."

Elizabeth said, "That story about our hiding and getting mixed up going out was just exactly what happened last week."

"And the one about being kind to a newcomer was about us, too," said Robert. "It was Grace last week she was talking about and the way we gave her crayons and everything, wasn't it, Grace?"

"Yes, it was," said Grace.

The teacher asked her if one reason why she liked the school was that the other children had made her feel welcome. She said, "Yes, it was the biggest thing." Throughout this discussion the children seemed very much interested in going over the incidents, recalling which children had said which things. They commented on the contrasting stories and Robert said, "We never do things that way in our class." When the teacher asked why, John said, "Well, we kind of work things out for ourselves. You treat us as though we were grown up."

The teacher asked them if they knew why Mrs. Fahs had felt that they might join the junior chapel service. Since none of them seemed to know, the teacher said, "Every week I hand in a report of the things that happen in this class, and by reading these reports each week Mrs. Fahs can tell whether or not we are growing. She feels that you children are growing every week. She can tell by the way in which you handle your own problems, such as the mix-up we had going out for our play. She saw that you could take hold of a difficulty and manage it yourselves like grown-up boys and girls. I think that is the reason why she felt you were old enough to be promoted and to go to the worship service with the older boys and girls." The teacher went on to ask, "When any trouble comes up how do we go about it to settle it?"

"Why, we all talk it over," said Jean. "You never do anything but ask us 'What about it?' and then we all talk it over and fix it up."

"Sure," said Robert, "and that's treating us as if we were grown up."

The teacher asked, "What if when someone were making a nuisance of himself I should say, 'Now you can go over and sit in a corner until you can behave?' "

"That would be treating us like babies," answered Robert.

During this discussion the children seemed to be on quite a mature level. The chapel service and the points there brought out had made a marked impression upon them. As they compared the different methods of handling situations, they felt much satisfaction over being treated like grown-up children.

Following this, the two appointed leaders, Jean and Grace, lined up the class to go out for recreation. The teacher asked the group where they wanted to go. Some said, "Riverside Drive." Others said, "The Campus." Jean said, "Let's vote." So they raised hands and the campus votes were in the majority. The orderliness of the class was quite marked. The experience of the previous week together with the chapel service had made a profound impression upon them.

During the first game of hide-and-seek Robert accused Jean of cheating while she was counting. During the second game Philip was "it." While he was counting up, James, the new boy, snatched the hat off Philip's head and ran away with it. Philip immediately forgot the game and started off after James. Soon the two were fighting. Then John joined them and the three had a "free-for-all." The others, abandoning their game of hide-and-seek, came and sat by the teacher and expressed their disgust. When the time came to return, the leaders brought the class into line and they quickly became orderly.

As soon as they were in their seats upstairs, Robert said, "Well, I think there are things to talk over about our play. For one thing, the way Jean peeked and then caught me."

Jean said, "I did not; you just hid in a crazy place where I couldn't help sort of seeing you through my fingers."

The teacher said, "Perhaps you did not mean to peek, but is it fair for you to try to lay the blame on Robert by saying he shouldn't have hid where he did?"

"No, she ought not to do that," said Philip. "She's just mad that we caught her."

"Well, I didn't mean to peek but when you count so high your eyes get awfully tired just being tight shut." This was Jean's second defense.

The teacher suggested that perhaps they had tried to count too high, but it was important to find the real reason why things happen and not just thoughtlessly lay the blame on someone else.

"I think we should discuss what James did," said Jean, changing the subject.

The teacher agreed, "All right, let's hear from James first."

James said, "Well, I was just having some fun and thought it would be fun to take Philip's hat and I should think he would have taken it as a joke, too."

"You spoiled the game for everybody, just thinking of yourself and your own little fun," spoke up Jean again.

"It was Philip who spoiled the game by paying attention to me," said James. "He should have gone right on with the game."

"Let's see about this," suggested the teacher. "Do you think Philip was justified in stopping the game right then to go after his hat?"

"Yes, because he might catch cold," said Jean. "His head was hot from running and taking off his cap could easily give him a cold. I think he did just right to go for it. It was all James' fault for being selfish and just thinking of his own fun."

"I don't think Philip should have stopped the game," said John. "If you don't pay any attention to people like James they stop the stuff, so if Philip had just gone on James wouldn't have had any fun."

When the teacher asked what the others thought, Philip said, "I think I did right in going for my cap. I didn't want to catch cold."

"You can't catch cold that quick," retorted James.

"I agree with Jean," said Robert. "I think Philip did right in going for his cap."

"So do I," chimed in Elizabeth.

The teacher summed up the discussion at this point to bring out the fact that when a game is being played by a group it is best for everyone to think in terms of the group's fun rather than in terms of his own private fun. This situation had shown how one person's fun spoiled the fun of six others. James seemed to take this hint in good spirit, at least, he did not seem at all offended.

Mr. Spear Knebel who was to lead the next eight junior worship services was planning a little experiment to find out what might be accomplished through a series of such services by way of enlarging the children's understanding and of deepening their appreciation of "poor people" and their concern for them. He prepared the following test which he asked the children to take.

SECTION I

(*Directions:* First mark the sentences printed in big letters, "T" for true and "F" for false. Next mark the sentences in small letters. Put a "T" in front of all those which you think are true and "TT" in front of the one which seems most true. Do not mark any small sentences under a big one which you have marked "F".)

. . . . I WOULD HELP ANOTHER FAMILY AS POOR AS THE "G" FAMILY NEXT CHRISTMAS.
. . . . because our class always does something like that at Christmas.
. . . . because I feel sorry for such poor families, since they will be cold and hungry during the winter unless someone helps them.
. . . . because I would feel ashamed not to help them when all the rest of my class were helping.
. . . . because the poor family has just as much right to have food and clothes as we have, even if they haven't enough money to buy them.
. . . . because God wants us to help poor people.
. . . . because it makes me feel better to help poor people.

. . . . I WOULD LIKE TO BECOME BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH THE FAMILY THAT MY CLASS HELPED AT CHRISTMAS TIME.
. . . . by going to visit them with my class.
. . . . by inviting the children to join my Sunday school.
. . . . by inviting them to a party given by my class.
. . . . by hearing more stories about them.
. . . . by living with some of the children in camp this summer.

. . . . by having mother give one of the children a job doing housework for us.

. . . . I WOULD RATHER NOT BECOME BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH THE FAMILY THAT MY CLASS HELPED AT CHRISTMAS.
. . . . because I have heard enough about them and now the story is getting stale.
. . . . because it makes me uncomfortable to think about them.
. . . . because there is nothing more that I could do to help them.
. . . . because I would be ashamed to be seen playing with them.
. . . . because mother says they would teach me bad habits.

SECTION II

(*Directions:* Finish these stories the way you would finish them if they really happened to you.)

I was waiting on the street corner until the autos had passed, when a strange man walked toward me. His shoulders were a little stooped and his hands were in his pockets. His clothes were worn, and his face was dirty and unpleasant looking. He came quite close to me and said,

"Say, kid, I ain't had nothin' to eat for a week. Kin you give me a nickel to buy a cup of coffee?"

(How would you feel? What would you do or say?)

. . . .
. . . .
. . . .

My father knows a poor widow who has three boys and two girls to take care of. They all live together in two tiny dark rooms near the East River. They are never quite warm at night because they don't have enough blankets. On very cold days some of the children have to stay home from school because there aren't enough warm clothes to go around.

We felt so sorry for them that we saved up fifty dollars and gave it to them at Christmas time. We all helped. Mother gave the money that she was going to use for a new dress; and I didn't buy any candy for three weeks, and gave the money I saved.

After Christmas we went down to see how the family was getting along. We found they had spent $25 of what we had given them for a radio which wasn't much good anyway. And they were almost as cold and hungry as before.

(How would you feel? What would you do or say?)

....

....

....

SECTION III

(*Directions:* Check with a "T" all the statements below which are sometimes true. Check with a "TT" the statements most often true.)

When people are poor it is often because:
. . . . they are lazy.
. . . . they have been honest and never cheated.
. . . . other people have been selfish.
. . . . they are stupid.
. . . . people who pay them their wages won't pay them enough.
. . . . they have had more sickness in their families than most people.
. . . . there never will be enough jobs to go around for every man.
. . . . they like to be poor because it's pleasant to be pitied.
. . . . they have not learned how to spend their money wisely.
. . . . God wants some people to be poor so we can learn to be kind.
. . . . they have too many children.
. . . . some other people insist on having more than their share of good things.

During the last period the children filled out these items, and were very much interested in them. The children had a little difficulty in spelling and writing and their lack of these skills was a hindrance in filling out the tests as intelligently as they might have done if they could have talked about them.

At the close of the period Robert said, "You know, Mrs. Sweet, I like this Sunday school lots better than day school."

James said, "I'll be here next week; I like it here."

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The teacher realized the value in having the children think through the reasons for their enjoyment of certain situations that arose in the Sunday school as well as to discuss the less desirable episodes. This served a two-fold purpose, that of encouraging the children to maintain their finer ideals of conduct, and also that of bringing them to realize that good behavior attracts as much attention and is as rewarding as the other kind. This was illustrated in the discussion following chapel when the children were made aware of the reasons why they were promoted to the junior department.

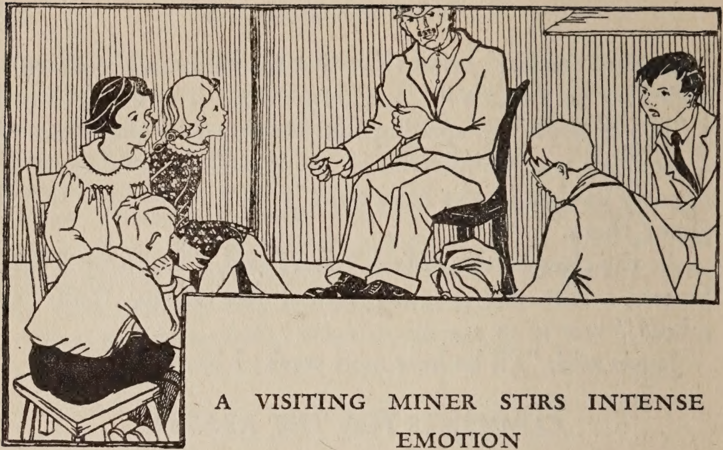
QUERIES

1. What do you think of the tendency to substitute "childish" and "grown-up" for "bad" and "good"?

2. Should a teacher become discouraged when children who have just appeared so mature in discussion engage in a "free-for-all" fight? What form do these disturbances take in older groups?

3. Did the teacher really sum up the discussion on the play period or merely point out the remarks which had been most pertinent to the real issue? What was the real issue?

4. Why did not the teacher center this discussion around Jean's cheating and use this episode as an opportunity to teach honesty?



A VISITING MINER STIRS INTENSE EMOTION

SIX children were present today, the absent ones all being away on account of illness.

While the children were waiting in the vestibule to go in to chapel, Jean said, "Yesterday I went down to the Museum of Natural History and saw figures of those early men like the ones we have been studying about here in school. You know the ones who were so afraid of God. They had the funniest-shaped heads you ever saw and such queer looking chins. They were just about like monkeys."

Robert said, "Well, man came from a gorilla so it isn't funny that those early men looked like monkeys."

"No, man didn't come from the gorilla," said Jean. "My father says there was something between a gorilla and a monkey that we don't know about yet."

"Well," said Robert, "maybe there is another step in there, but you can still say he came from a gorilla in the beginning." This conversation was interrupted by the beginning of chapel.

Mr. Knebel led the chapel service this morning on the subject of coal miners. He spoke briefly about the need for coal in the world and pictured the steps necessary to make it available for use. Then he introduced the speaker of the morning, Mr. Glovak, one of the coal miners who were on strike in Pennsylvania. Mr. Glovak wore a miner's cap on his head, and spoke English with a foreign accent as he told the children stories of his own experiences as a coal miner. He explained why so many miners were on strike, how much of risk and uncertainty was involved in mining, how unfairly the mine owners and the policemen had treated the miners' families and why unions are needed so that the miners can protest when they are not getting a square deal. All the children were deeply stirred.

Following the chapel, the children went to the handcraft room for a period of hand-work with Miss Smedley. On the way Jean said, "Oh, I wish we could take up our collection right now and give it to that man. I think it's awful what he must suffer." John said, "I wish we could ask him some questions." Robert said, "So do I." Since all the children agreed that they would like to hear more from the miner, the teacher suggested that Robert and John go down and see if Mr. Glovak could come to the class. Meanwhile, the others started their hand-work.

Jean could talk of nothing but the poor miners. She said, "I'd like to bring a dollar every Sunday for six weeks for that man and then he would go back and say to all the people, 'Do you know, there was one girl that gave six dollars for us.' "

Since after the lapse of ten or fifteen minutes Robert and John did not come back, the teacher went downstairs in search of them. To her surprise, she found gathered in the classroom of the seventh- and eighth-grade girls, about twenty or thirty children, sitting on tables, and chairs, and anything available, listening with rapt attention to the miner as he told more stories. Among the children were Robert and John, so absorbed they had forgotten their errand.

When the teacher realized the possibilities in this opportunity, she returned to her class and told the children what was happening. As a result, as soon as they had finished painting their star-fishes, they all went downstairs and joined the group listening to Mr. Glovak. There they stayed until a quarter of eleven.

As they left this meeting, Jean said, "We didn't get a chance to ask him anything because we were the smallest ones there. Couldn't we have him come to our class?"

"Yes, let's have him," said Robert. "There are lots of things I want to ask."

John said, "He's so hard to understand, let's go out and play."

"Well, if we had him at our little table we probably could hear him," pleaded Robert. "We can go out and play every day but we can't hear a coal miner every day."

The other children all agreed that they would like to ask Mr. Glovak more questions. They decided to go outdoors for fifteen minutes and then come in and have Mr. Glovak with them for a half hour.

Jean and Grace were the leaders today. Jean's methods when she was in control were quite autocratic. As a result she did not gain the coöperation of the others as well as she might. In the elevator she gave John a push and said, "Get over there," and John pushed her in return. "Mrs. Sweet," she called, "when I'm leader, make them mind me!"

"That isn't for me to do, Jean," said the teacher. "Perhaps you had better think whether your methods of managing the others are right before you try to thrust the responsibility on to me as the teacher. When I am leading the group upstairs at the table and something goes wrong do I shove you around to make you do as I think best? Would you feel like doing it if I did?" Jean said, "No, I wouldn't." The teacher suggested to Jean that perhaps John felt the same way when she used those methods with him.

Jean seemed to take this conversation to heart a little, but she could not quite relinquish her power as leader and stop using high-handed methods on the others. Robert particularly chafed under her domination. "I always feel like scrapping with Jean," he said. "Everybody does because she always starts it." The teacher told Robert to remember that it takes two to fight and that it is well to consider both sides before judging people.

On the way back to the classroom the teacher suggested that if the others didn't like the way Jean ruled them, they might try acting so grown-up that it would be unnecessary for her to use such methods on them. This carried the children through.

When they returned to the classroom, Mr. Glovak was there and they all sat around the table and talked. Jean said when she went in, "Oh, Mr. Glovak, I want to sit right beside you." Then she asked him what happened when the mouth of the mines tumbled in. He said that often the men were smothered and never came out alive.

James said, "Well, what does the coal company do for their families then?" Mr. Glovak told about the miners' insurance which amounts in all to about $4,000,000. When a man is killed or injured, his family receive their share of this insurance, which is not very much when you consider how many years the money may have to last. Mr. Glovak went on to tell the group of the great strain of a miner's life, how he is in constant danger of being killed, and especially how hard it is not to know whether his job will last a week or a year.

"Well, why did you ever come to be a miner if it's such an awful life?" asked John. Then Mr. Glovak told them that he was born in Hungary and was left an orphan at twelve years of age. Since he had no money there was just nothing else in sight to do but to go into the mines. He described how in those early days he had worked sixteen hours for only thirty-five cents. Many of the children were on the verge of tears as he pictured his childhood.

Robert asked, "Have you got a family?"

"Yes," said Mr. Glovak. "I have a girl who is married. I have a boy of twenty and one fifteen and a girl fourteen and another girl eleven. Then I had a boy of twenty-one who was killed in the mine on October sixth."

"How did he get killed?" asked someone eagerly. Mr. Glovak went into the tragic story of how the boy became tired of striking and wanted to go to Detroit to get a job, but had no money for carfare and no decent clothes to wear. So without telling his father, who had told him it was wrong to "scab," he went into a mine as a "scab" and was given a job of snapping the cars,—work which he knew nothing about. Because the boy was not skilled he did not know how to avoid danger, and he was crushed to death between the cars and the side of the mine.

James said, "He didn't mind you, did he, when you told him not to scab?" "No," Mr. Glovak said, "he wouldn't listen to me. He got tired of striking and forgot the big cause we were working for and just thought of himself. And then he got killed."

Philip said, "How dreadful for those mine owners to put men into work they don't know, like that." Mr. Glovak said that that was one thing the owners could do to help break a strike. He felt the mine owners would do anything for their own selfish ends. He said, "That is why we need to strike for a union, so the owners can't keep on doing these unfair things." The children were deeply stirred.

Mr. Glovak related another story to show another kind of unfairness which miners often have to face. A boss came to a miner's house late one night, demanding the right to come in and have some beer. Since the miner was afraid not to let him in, he gave the boss some beer. Then the boss tried to be sociable in a way that was so unpleasant to the miner's wife that she pushed the boss away from her. Being very much provoked at this, the boss said, "Well, we'll see if your husband has such a good job tomorrow." The next morning the miner was fired. Some other excuse was given at the office, but the miner believed he knew the real reason for his being fired.

At this point Mr. Glovak was obliged to leave since another class was asking for him. Being alone, the children poured out their questions even more freely.

"Why was the boss so mean to that miner?" was the first question asked. The teacher attempted to retell the story in language which the children could better understand. She realized, however, that the miner had described a situation the full significance of which eight-year-old children could not appreciate.

"How terrible," exclaimed James. "Just like kings! In olden times a king could say, 'Your head,' and off would come a head for no good reason. This is just as bad." The teacher said, "Yes, it is just like that." She went on to explain how very unfair it is for certain people to have so much power that they can do anything they wish regardless of whether there are real, honest reasons for doing so.

Philip asked what it meant to strike. The teacher explained this more simply than Mr. Glovak had done. She told the children that striking was the miners' way of demanding fair treatment. She also explained what a union is, and why the coal miners were striking for the right to have one. When the period was over the teacher felt that many large issues had merely been touched upon.

Several of the children lingered after the ringing of the bell.

"I guess I'll be an aviator," said Philip.

"I used to think I'd be a miner, but I guess now I won't," said Robert. "I sometimes think I'd like to be a poet or an author or artist. I like those quiet occupations best. I do very well in drawing at school. I get plus in it every time. I write rather good poems, too. Mother says I write better ones than she did at my age."

At this point, Philip was saying to Grace, "You couldn't be a miner because you're a girl."

"Sure she could," said Robert. "There's no difference between boys and girls in what they can do."

"I know it," said Philip, "but she'd have to be tough to be a miner, that's all I was thinking about."

"Well, I think we should bring bigger collections," said Jean, "and give the money to those poor strikers." "I do, too," Robert said. The teacher suggested that they talk about all this next Sunday. She said that the best way to help people who are suffering is first to find out all we can about them. Then we are in a better position to tell what would bring them the most permanent help.

The teacher realized that a big new field of experience, one full of many complex and difficult problems, had been opened up to the children. In order to clarify in her own mind some of the issues raised she made this summary of them:

1. Why is it that some people are forced into lines of work where there is so much unfairness and suffering? The children could not quite grasp why it was that people become caught in the industrial tide and cannot pull themselves out.

2. The children left with a deep feeling of pity for the suffering miners on strike. Their first desire was to give money. The teacher saw in this situation a challenge to lead them into a fuller understanding.

3. The issue was raised as to whether this miner's son did right in disobeying his father and becoming a scab in order to make money to live his own life, thus separating himself from a big cause.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The policy of the school was to have enough flexibility in the program to allow unusual interests to have right of way. In today's session, therefore, Mr. Glovak was asked to remain throughout the entire morning because the children from all the classes who had heard him clamored for more stories of the coal miners' strike.

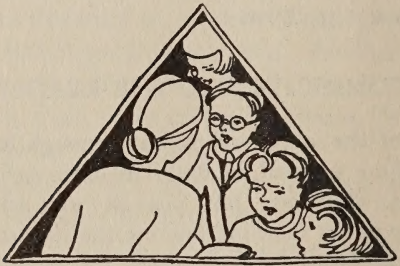
The teacher considered it one of her functions as a leader to encourage the children to withhold final decisions until they had explored all the possibilities, in order that their judgments might be based on reasonably careful thinking. This was illustrated in today's session when she recommended that before deciding to give the miner all their money, the children talk more about the situation next Sunday.

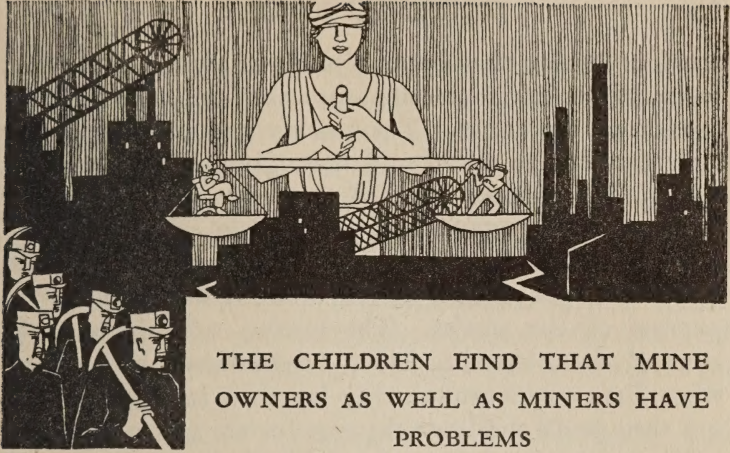
QUERIES

1. Is it worth while occasionally to "omit the regular lesson" in order that the children may have a more intimate contact with some visiting speaker?

2. Should the teacher have permitted the children to give way to their impulse to help the miners with their offerings, as part of their missionary training, or was it better not to allow them emotional relief so easily?

3. What are the values and the dangers in leading children into such highly-emotionalized experiences?





THE CHILDREN FIND THAT MINE OWNERS AS WELL AS MINERS HAVE PROBLEMS

ONLY three children were present today, Jean, John and Grace. Two of the absentees were sick and it was a cold, snowy day.

Mr. Knebel led the junior worship service. His theme was a consideration of the mining situation from the point of view of the mine owner rather than from that of the miner. He told the children that sometimes hundreds of different people may own one mine; that perhaps even some of them were part owners of a mine. If giving miners better wages would mean cutting down part of the interest money which they as investors were counting on, how would they feel about it? Mr. Knebel intimated that the situation was very difficult and that there were selfish people on both sides. At the close of his talk he suggested one definite way in which the children might help the suffering miners as they were struggling for fairer treatment, and that was through the buying of books of meal tickets to send to the miners' children.

After the chapel, the children engaged in hand-work. Having completed their study of early sea life on the previous Sunday they began a study of certain of the first forms of sea life that came onto the land. Today they considered the turtle. The teacher had brought a pair of live turtles to school and these greatly stimulated interest. The children watched the turtles and noted their coloring, their texture, and the way in which they hid inside in their shells. They found the turtles able to turn over if they got on their backs. The children drew crayon pictures of the turtles. The teacher told the class of some of the interesting habits turtles have, for instance, when June comes around they lay their eggs in the sand and then go off and leave the eggs for the sun to hatch.

The teacher read from *In the Beginning*, a history of early times written for little children by Eva Erleigh. This explained how the planets evolved and how life began on the earth.

John said, "Isn't it interesting? First, little jelly-like stuff kept dividing to make more of itself, and then by and by it sent off less and less of itself until it was just an egg it had laid, and that developed into a new one. Now just think of that turtle. How did she come to know that she had better lay her eggs in the sand in summer so they would hatch? It almost looks as though she must have a mind."

The teacher asked whether, as they saw these wonderful things working out in nature, the children thought that animals must have minds, or whether they thought there might be a purpose back of all this growing and changing that made it possible for life to develop in this way.

Jean said, "Well, I think there must be a purpose back of it all. It's God, I think. Because animals haven't brains."

The teacher asked the children to consider for instance the difference at birth between turtles and themselves. Suppose human mothers and fathers just went off and left their children the minute they were born, could they manage as well as baby turtles can? And how did it make the children feel to think that turtles are so capable at birth while human children are so helpless?

"A turtle knows all he ever will as soon as he is born," said John. "He can start right out and swim and find food and do everything turtles do. But he never learns anything else."

"Well, we don't know much when we're born," said Grace, "but we can learn an awful lot and can keep learning all our lives."

"You can't help but admire turtles for being so independent right away," said John, "but it seems as though they were selfish to just stop that way and not think how they can make the world better the way people do."

The teacher asked if it was the turtle's fault that he couldn't think and help to make the world better.

"Why, no," said Jean. "He's just gone that far. But man is the highest kind of animal there is."

The teacher took up the point which the children had made that while many animals are more capable at birth, they are not as capable of learning as people are. She said, "Look at those two turtles in the jar. If they wanted to get out, they would have only a few ways of trying to do it, and those just according to feeling. But if you boys and girls were shut up in this room what would you do if you wanted to get out?"

John said, "I'd think of all the ways I might get out, either by yelling for help, or by breaking the window and climbing down, or by trying the door. And then if I tried something and it didn't work, I'd never do it again. That's how we learn."

"Yes, we're luckier than the turtles," said Jean.

The teacher asked the children if they didn't think that more should be expected of children than of turtles since children have minds that they can use. The teacher emphasized the fact that here was a challenge to them to use their minds in thinking out things that might make the world better and better for everybody.

The class went over to Riverside Drive for their recreation period and played in the snow. The day was very cold. When John returned to the room, he was crying because his hands were so cold. The children sat around the radiator to dry their legs. Since they wanted to hear more about early life on the earth, the teacher read further from *In the Beginning*. The reading included descriptions of the early forms of animals, including some that are now extinct.

Jean said, "Well, how does anybody know that those big animals lived if they are all dead now?"

The teacher asked the children if they could think of any ways by which men might find out what sorts of animals had existed so long ago.

"Well, people have told about these animals ever since then and so we know," suggested Grace. "And it is in books."

"People go and dig up their bones," said John, "that's how we know. There was an expedition that went way up into Mongolia and found the bones and eggs of dinosaurs. I saw movies of it."

The children were fascinated with the story from Eva

Erleigh's book, and asked the teacher to continue reading from it next Sunday.

Today the class spent some time also in reviewing the different ideas of God that men had held through the ages. The teacher told the children that she would go on with this study the next week and would read more stories about the early wanderers and shepherds, telling something about this early life as well as of the ideas of God then held. Grace reviewed the last story, which had been given two weeks before, and remembered every detail of how the early farmers or agriculturists worshipped during the different seasons.

The last half hour was taken up with a discussion of the chapel service. The emotional tension of the previous Sunday seemed to have gone, and the children discussed the mining situation quite objectively. The teacher suggested that they try to think what it would be like to be the son of a mine owner. Suppose the mine owner could not market the coal as fast as the miners dug it, where would money be found with which to pay the dividends to those who had loaned money, and also to pay the miners and still to have enough left to live on? How would the mine owner send his children to school?

"It's a problem all right," admitted John. "But I still think the mine owners could share more evenly with the miners. It's because they want so much for themselves."

The teacher said that John had made a good point.

"And the owners don't work, so why should they expect to get money?" thought Grace.

The teacher said, "Don't mine owners work? Who thinks out the plans for operating the mines and for finding markets for the coal? Don't you consider that thinking is work?"

"Of course, it's work, but it's a different kind," said John. "It's pleasanter to sit in an office and do the thinking than to get into that dark mine."

"Yes," added Jean, "think of the dangers the workers are in all the time, thinking they may never get out to see their families again."

The children agreed that the miner was worse off than the owner, though they did admit that the owner has his problems. The teacher asked them to think how they as boys and girls could help this situation the most.

"Well, I don't know," said John.

The teacher asked the children if they thought being intelligent and trying to think about the problem would be any help. She suggested that if sometime they were where people were talking about miners, perhaps merely telling the facts would help. She said, "What if you heard people talking about the poor miners and saying that the owners ought to be killed or put in jail, what would you think?"

"Why, we would say, 'That wouldn't help any because the owner has his problems, too,' " said Jean. "Something must be done so that everybody can be happy about it."

The teacher said that being intelligent on a subject and seeing both sides of a question before trying to solve it was something for which to strive. She asked the children if they realized that to start early in life to think out problems was the very best way to fit themselves for helping to solve the problems of the larger world when they grew up. It was just like swimming. If children learn to swim when they are young, they will be able to swim easily when they are big. If children begin when they are young to think out the problems of industry, to find out how everybody in the world may secure a square deal, they will be better able to solve the problems when they are grown.

The teacher then asked the class what they thought about giving money to the miners.

Jean said, "Well, of course, that only helps them just for now in this emergency. It doesn't really help the problem."

It was interesting that Jean took this viewpoint when she had been the most emotional about giving money a week earlier. The children discussed whether or not to buy some of the meal-ticket books, but decided to wait until the following week for the final decision since so many children were absent.

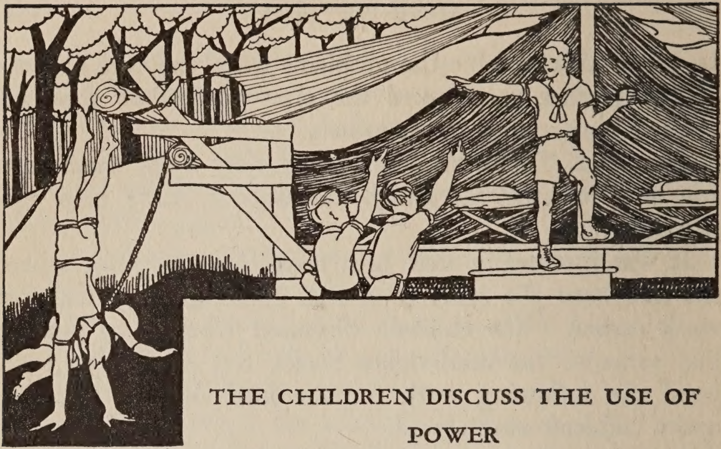
COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The teacher realized the value of introducing the children to such emotional experiences as they had had with Mr. Glovak, but she felt the importance of "seeing them through" in their thinking on these situations. Her desire was to be there when they came down from such emotional heights in order to help them see the true meanings in the experience.

QUERIES

1. Was the teacher's suggestion about helping the miners by trying to become intelligent about their situation, an adequate educational substitute for giving the financial help which the children wished to give?

2. Would you say the children were having religious experiences as they discussed jellyfish and turtles? Do you like their way of discovering God?



THE CHILDREN DISCUSS THE USE OF POWER

Six children were present today. Ruth returned after a month's illness and Elizabeth after three weeks' illness. Robert and Philip, who had been absent the previous week, said they had been kept in with colds.

In the chapel service Mr. Knebel told a story of Howard, a boy at a summer camp, who discovered, when he received a box of candy, cake and fruit from home, that he had acquired a new power over the rest of the boys, and proceeded to use his newly gained power for his own personal satisfaction.

After telling the story, Mr. Knebel said that Howard was not the only person who had found out that having things which others have not gives the person who has a power over those who have not. It was because some mine owners had been like Howard that the miners had gone on strike in Pennsylvania to protect themselves.

Mr. Knebel then introduced Mr. Tippett, once a miner and now a professor in Brookwood Labor College. Mr. Tippett described the conditions in the mining town in which he had lived and worked as a small boy, before there were miners' unions, and contrasted these conditions with those in his home when he was twenty years old after a union had been formed. The contrast was used to show why the miners were fighting to maintain their unions. It was not because the miners wished to get out of working, but because they believe that everybody who works ought to have a fair share of "the apples and candy and cookies."

Following the chapel, the children went to the handcraft room and modelled turtles in clay. Robert brought a toy turtle of his own which made a very good model and the teacher had again brought two live turtles. The children worked quite well and some of them made creditable models. Jean played helpless, seeking a good deal of the teacher's attention. Philip was inclined to weave fairy stories about his work instead of sticking to it.

While the children were washing their hands after working on the clay, John threw some water on Robert who in turn threw more water back until together they had the little washroom quite wet. The teacher appeared in the midst of this sport, and said, "What about this?" John and Robert admitted they had been fooling. The teacher asked, "What had we better do about it?" "I suppose we'd better clean it up," said Robert. Immediately the two set to work.

When they returned to the classroom, the teacher asked the boys to tell what had happened and what they got out of it.

"I threw water on Robert just for fun," said John.

Robert replied, "Well, I threw water back because I had to give him as good as he sent, didn't I?"

The teacher asked the other children what they thought. She said that she thought that throwing water was really a babyish sort of fun and not what one would expect in the junior department.

"Indeed you didn't need to send him back as good as he sent," said Jean to Robert. "That's no way to settle a quarrel. Just don't pay any attention."

"Once a street man said nasty things to me and I just didn't pay any attention," said Ruth. "Then he began pulling my hair and I didn't pay any attention. I just hurried on home."

Philip agreed, "Sure, that's what Robert should have done, just gone and not paid any attention."

"I suppose so," said Robert.

The teacher suggested that for John to throw water in the first place was scarcely what we should expect of children who are grown up enough to be in the junior department.

"I guess that's right," admitted John.

Since so many children had been absent the previous Sunday the discussion about turtles was repeated, John and Jean taking turns in telling the things that had been discovered. The children again had quite a discussion as to whether animals such as turtles have brains with which to think things out.

"Sometimes turtles pretend they are dead so you won't hurt them," said Ruth. "That seems awfully wonderful."

"Yes, but they 'feel' all that," said John. "They never know enough to do anything more than just what they knew when they are born."

The children asked the teacher to read once more from *In the Beginning*. The first chapter, describing the world in its beginning, created quite a discussion. They had all heard stories that were essentially the same but different in details and each told the story as he had heard it.

The children then went to the campus for their play period. No serious clashes developed.

The next period was taken up with a discussion of the chapel talk. Jean, referring to the chapel speaker, said, "I like that man. He wore awfully good clothes. I hardly could believe he had been a miner."

"You could understand him better than you could Mr. Glovak," Robert added.

The teacher said, "Well, what did you think about the things he said and about Mr. Knebel's story of the boy who used his jam and cake to gain power over the other boys?"

"People ought to be kind when they have power," said Robert. "It's very bad when people who have power are mean and use it unfairly over others."

"I know it and I hope the poor miners can get their union," Elizabeth said. "My brother is selling meal tickets to feed the hungry families, and I gave five dollars to buy some. I wish we could sell some."

Desiring to continue the discussion of power, the teacher suggested that the class talk a little later about selling tickets.

"My mother went to get our clothes at the Chinese laundry last week and he had lost one of our shirts," Ruth related. "The laundryman is very poor but he felt so badly that he gave my mother the money for it. She told my father about it and he said she shouldn't ever take her laundry there again. But my mother said the laundryman was honest and poor and she wanted to help him by taking her things there so he could make up that money."

The teacher, sensing the fact that Ruth had told her story in an inquiring way, asked which attitude the class thought was the better, Ruth's mother's or her father's?

Robert said, "Maybe the laundryman stole the shirt in the first place because he was so poor, and didn't really lose it at all."

The teacher said she didn't see how he would gain by that if he had to give the money for it.

"I don't see the point in the story," said Jean.

The teacher attempted to link up the discussion with the chapel talk by saying that after Ruth's mother got the money for the shirt then in a way she had power. She could either just stop going to that laundry and make the laundryman lose the trade upon which he had come to depend, or she might take a kinder and more considerate attitude, as Ruth's mother had done, realizing that it had been a mistake on the part of the laundryman and that he was poor and did need her trade.

"She did the right thing," said Philip. The other children seemed to agree with this opinion.

The teacher took this opportunity to explain a little more vividly what a big problem is this one of power. She asked the children if they thought the world could ever get along without people in control. They all agreed that it could not.

"Mercy, this country would be a mess without a president," Philip said emphatically.

"How about our class," asked the teacher. "Could it get along without leaders?"

"I should say not," said Robert. "Remember the time we had when we didn't have any leaders?"

Then the teacher pointed out that this was a problem for the mine owners, for the president of a country, and for the leaders in a class at Union School. The point was made that unless children learn how to use power rightly when they are small, when they are grown they won't use it in any better way than some of the mine owners were doing.

"That's right," Robert said. "If boys and girls get in the habit of being cross and mean when they are little, that is the kind of big people they will be."

The teacher asked the children to think how they would use power when they were in positions that gave them power. They all grew quite thoughtful as they discussed what the right attitude should be.

Robert said, "It's always best to be kind and think of how the thing you do is going to affect the other person." The children all agreed that this was a good thing to remember.

Then the class took up the subject of buying meal tickets and decided to buy some with the collection money they had accumulated.

Following this, the teacher read more stories of early life on earth.

"Those people didn't have as good minds as we have," Philip remarked.

"It's taken millions of years to get where we are. Man's brain has developed," John said.

The children were fascinated with the stories of early man and his struggle with the universe. When it was time to close, Robert said, "Oh, don't stop. Let's have more." The teacher assured the class that they would have more of the stories the next Sunday.

"I like this school so much better than day school," said Robert.

"I like it too, but we don't learn as much here as we do at school," Jean said.

Robert added, "Well, Mrs. Sweet puts things in such an interesting way here. It makes things seem different."

The teacher said, "I am glad Robert and Jean have brought out these points. As far as book knowledge is concerned you do not learn as much here as in the day schools. But what we try to do here is to put things in a new light, as Robert suggests. We try to see life as a whole and to fit in all the knowledge that we get at home and at school, and look at it altogether so that life can become a 'whole' for us. We try to understand the world, to understand ourselves, and to share our ideas and problems with each other."

Robert said, "Well, I certainly like it."

"You know I got double plus in science last month," said John, changing the subject.

"You're crazy," said Philip. "There isn't such a thing as double plus."

"Well, I got it," John assured him.

"I got that in drawing," said Robert. "You see I practise and practise and now I really sketch rather well."

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The reader may be surprised at the apparent let-down on the part of the children in going so casually to their hand-work period after an inspiring chapel talk. This was partly because they knew that a time was provided later in the morning for a discussion of the chapel program, and also because they realized that the handcraft specialist was available only at this hour.

Whenever possible the teacher attempted to translate the larger social problems which were introduced to the children in terms of their own experience in order to give reality to the problems of others. In the discussion of the problem of power she helped the children to see it not only as a mine owner's problem but also as a problem for the leaders in their Sunday school class.

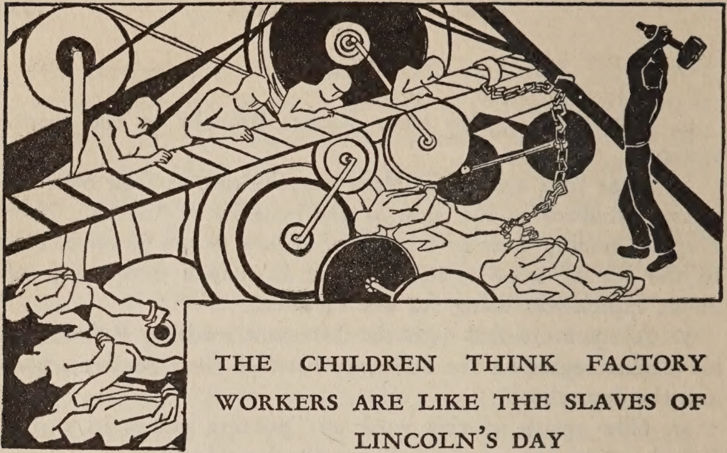
QUERIES

1. Why was another labor speaker brought to the chapel service?

2. Some time ago the children were looking at their own behavior problems in the light of the behavior of turtles. Now they are finding their own problem of how to use power related to the life of mine owners. What is such a wide range of direct experiences doing for the children?

3. Are you satisfied with the statement made by Robert and his teacher regarding the difference between their Sunday school and the day school?

4. How much of this work of "putting things in a new light" can be done in the ordinary Sunday school?



THE CHILDREN THINK FACTORY WORKERS ARE LIKE THE SLAVES OF LINCOLN'S DAY

Nine children were present today, all the class, except Janet who is still away on account of illness. Everyone arrived on time,—a great improvement over the record of previous weeks.

The theme of the chapel service again was centered around the problems of underpaid workers and how we can discover the secret of getting along happily together. Mr. Webber, the speaker of the morning, talked about the workers in certain paper box factories of New York. He told the story of their strike to gain better conditions for themselves in the factories,—a strike which was maintained for nineteen weeks and which finally failed.

Following the chapel service, the children went to the handcraft room to paint the turtles which they had modelled the previous Sunday. Some children finished quickly and were eager to get out all the objects they had made to look them over. Robert asked if he might take his things home. Miss Smedley suggested that everyone wait until the end of the year so that their work could be exhibited in the annual exhibit of the school. Philip remarked that Jean's starfish looked like scrambled eggs.

As it was Lincoln's birthday, Robert had brought some old newspaper extras that had come out at the time Lincoln was assassinated. These caused the children to talk a good deal about Lincoln.

Philip and James had been the leaders coming from chapel and once when James was walking too fast for Philip, Philip gave James a big yank to get him back in place. The teacher said nothing at the time.

After the handcraft work when the children were ready for a discussion, the teacher asked them how they enjoyed the chapel service.

James said, "It was all very interesting. But you know it just seems to me that the way people are treated in those factories is about like slavery. I'll bet if Lincoln was alive today he would work to free the factory workers just like he did the slaves."

The teacher asked the other children if they thought it was true that the workers and miners are almost as badly off as the slaves had been.

"Yes," agreed John, "and nothing can get better until the people who own the factories learn how to use their power right."

The teacher asked how he thought they should use their power.

"Well, they should share instead of taking everything for themselves," said John, "and they should think what it is like to be a worker."

James said, "This week in school Mr. Pierson told about that, and he said that the golden rule was a good thing to remember, 'Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.' He told us how all the different people in the world have had this same thought but expressed it a little differently."

"Jesus said, 'If you get slapped on one cheek, turn the other,' " quoted Jean. "I wonder how that would work."

The teacher asked the children what they thought of this. She asked what they would do if somebody should hit them, and she pointed out that she did not mean the kind of hitting that was done in play and fun.

"Well, I know the best thing would be to talk it over." This was John's suggestion.

Robert added, "And probably there would be something on each side, too. A fight is never just one person's fault."

"Sometimes you get into an awful fight when people hit you and you hit back," Ruth said.

"Yes, and it doesn't usually settle it, either," James pointed out.

The teacher said that all these things were true. It is important to remember the point that Robert made that there are always two sides to a quarrel, and that in settling it one must see the thing clearly from each side, just as in the cases of the workers in the box factories and the miners in the mines. It isn't enough just to see the workers' side. It is important to understand also the owners' point of view before things can be settled justly.

"It is the same with war," said Robert. "People quarrel when they are little and then when they get big there are wars."

The teacher elaborated this point to show the children how important it is to build up the right habits of dealing with other people and of learning to get along together.

The teacher then turned the discussion to more immediate problems. "What did you think of your leaders in going to chapel this morning?" she asked.

Right away Philip said, "Well, James was always rushing ahead so fast that we couldn't keep together."

The teacher asked Philip if he remembered what method he had used to call this to James' attention. He said, "I pulled him a little."

James put the matter more strongly, saying, "Philip yanked me and I didn't like it."

The teacher said, "We want to remember that the way we act as children when we are in power is the way we are likely to act when we are grown up. If when we are children, we yank people to get them to do things, what are we likely to do when we own a box factory?"

Philip said, "Well, I don't intend to own a box factory."

"Well, you may have to," said James. "You can't always choose what you are going to do, and anyway you'll be doing something with other people no matter what you do."

The teacher told Philip that the class was not criticizing him but merely trying to help him to see what methods he was using and to think whether those were the methods he wanted to see owners of factories and mines use when they had power.

"Well," exclaimed Ruth, "sometimes it's quicker to get people to do things if you pull them and make them."

"It is not," answered Robert.

The teacher asked the children to think which method they preferred to have used when other people were dealing with them, that of talking things over and pointing out reasons, or that of saying "You've got to do this." They all chose the former method.

James said, "You know to understand the working man and to try to get him free as Lincoln did the slaves is something I might do when I grow up. In fact, I believe I will, if no one has thought of it before I get big enough. I think the best way to do it would be to go in and be a boss and show how it could be done right so that the workers would be free."

The teacher said that this was a fine thing to think about, and that the way for children to begin to understand about it all was to learn all they could about conditions in the world, and to try to see all points of view, and to think about what could be done, so that everyone might be free and happy in the world.

"Why don't those workers go to the President right now?" Elizabeth asked. "They are getting lower wages than they did before."

"It isn't so easy to get to the President," John suggested.

"Why not go to Mayor Walker, then?" asked James.

The teacher said that the children were right, that the government officials should understand these things and that the country should be organized so that all the people would be free and so that every laborer might work under good conditions and receive fair wages. She said that there would be hope for the future when more people understood the facts.

While the children were putting on their wraps to go outdoors, they were looking again at the newspaper accounts of Lincoln's death and wanted to know all about how he had been shot in the theatre. One of the visitors who had seen Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln" answered their questions.

During the play period the children seemed to have a good time, although Robert teased Jean a good deal and she was quick to hit him back. She said to the teacher, "What kind of a man do you think Robert will ever make when he does these things as a little boy?" The teacher said it was hard to tell, but asked Jean if she had ever thought what kind of a woman she would make if she hit him back every time he teased her.

Following the play period the children continued their study of nature and early life in the universe. This nature work and the study of man's developing ideas of God have really come together in a study of evolution and the meaning back of it all. The children were fascinated with the book *In the Beginning* by Eva Erleigh. There were to have been more stories about the cavemen today, but James had been absent for a number of weeks and asked to be told what had been going on. Since the children did not resent this interruption, Jean told how the earth was once a fiery hot piece of the sun that flew off into space. She told also of the earth's cooling, of the forming of water on its surface, and then of the appearance in the water of a tiny jelly-like substance that had life.

James said, "Well, there are just two things I'd like to know. First, where the little jelly-like thing came from, and second, what about this Adam and Eve stuff? It seems to me that religion tells us one thing about how the world started and science tells us another. Which are we to believe? It doesn't seem to me that science explains how that jelly-like thing came any better than the Adam and Eve story about the first man."

Robert said, "Well, science hasn't been able to tell us yet how that first life came to be, but we just call it God back of it all. Some day men probably will know. You can't say whether there is a God or isn't, but you can call whatever started life in the world God."

Jean said, "Well, I know there is a God because lots of times I pray and my prayers are answered, so there must be a God that answers them."

The teacher asked Jean if she really thought God from outside somewhere stepped in and changed the way things were going just to answer her prayer, or whether what she called an answer to her prayer was the way things worked out naturally. Jean said it seemed to her that it must be God answering her prayer.

The teacher went back to James' other query about the Adam and Eve story and told the children again that she thought it was a legend that had grown up after a great many men had tried to imagine what the beginning may have been like, and where people came from, but that now these legends have been replaced by a more scientific understanding of man's origin. The teacher also took some time to show the children that religion and science do not necessarily disagree. When men used all the scientific knowledge they had and then brought God into the picture as the power back of all things, giving life an upward drive, these men had religion. The teacher assured James that she thought this was religion just as truly as the religion of the Adam and Eve story. In fact she thought that the religion the class had been talking about was a finer type of religion because the people of long ago did not know as much as scientists now know.

The last fifteen minutes were spent in reading the account of Lincoln's assassination in the papers which Robert had brought.

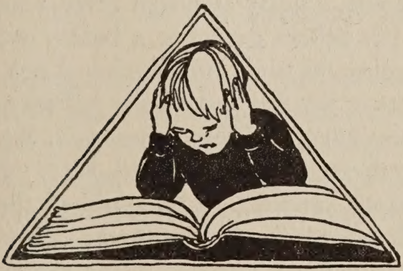
QUERIES

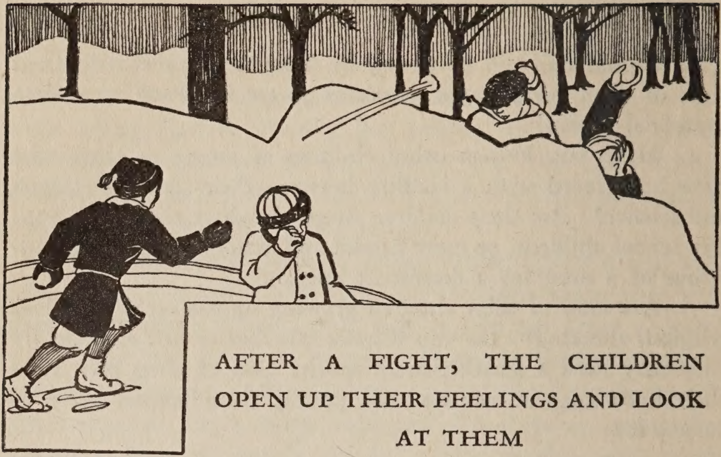
1. Is it better to work in "review lessons" when they are called for as in this case by the needs of a pupil who has been absent, or is it preferable to wait until the end of the quarter?
2. How might the teacher have enriched James' suggestion that the factory workers were like the slaves in Lincoln's day? Should she have pointed out the differences?

3. Should children so young be introduced to the different sides of such complicated problems as are involved in modern industrial strikes?

4. Have you known other children as young as these who have been faced with a conflict between their ideas of religion and science? Are these children simply brighter than most Sunday school children, or more candid and articulate, or more conscious of a need for a consistent religion?

5. Are some of these children growing up too rapidly in their religious thinking? Do you wonder whether or not emotionally they may need a smaller, more special God of their own than their knowledge of science may permit them intellectually to believe in?





AFTER A FIGHT, THE CHILDREN OPEN UP THEIR FEELINGS AND LOOK AT THEM

EIGHT children were present today, including a girl friend of Jean's. Elizabeth was ill with a cold and both Ruth and Grace were absent. Janet returned after a long period of sickness, and the others gave her a hearty welcome back.

Instead of going, as usual, to the chapel for worship, the entire department was invited to the hallway on the fifth floor of the Seminary building where Mr. Knebel's sixth-grade boys were to give an original play. By means of black crêpe paper fastened to the wall at the end of the hall, and by dimming the lights, the boys had created the illusion of a coal mine. The first scene depicted miners at work in the mine, a union leader recruiting, and an accident. The second scene presented a meeting of mine owners and officials in the office of the Black Coal Mining Company where they discussed the vastness of their financial investments and risks. A committee from the union presented a request for higher wages and safer conditions. They were denied their plea. The third scene was back in the mine, where a rescue party were searching the mine after the accident, and a dead body was found and carried out on a stretcher.

"Sad, ain't it?" said the man holding one end of the stretcher.

"Believe me, if the people that own this mine only had our job, and could see what we see, things might change."

"Maybe," said the other. "But that ain't all of it. If the people all over the country cared a little more about what happens to these boys, things might change."

The play presented in vivid contrast the mine owners' risks and those of the miners, the value of money as over against the value of life.

Following the chapel service the children discussed the play and its meaning. Since some of the children had come late, the others told them what the play was about. John told the story of the first scene and Jean that of the second.

All the children were courteous to the visitor and made her feel much at ease. She began at once to take an active part in the morning's discussion. She was older than the other children, having belonged to a sixth-grade class in a Sunday school more conventional in type than the Union School of Religion.

She said, "Well, the message in the play was that life is more important than money. You did feel that the mine owner had risks to run with handling other people's money, but not such great risks as the miner who wondered every day if he would be killed."

"Mr. Glovak told us that on the average a man a day was killed in the mines," said John. "I think the mine owners are just plain stingy. Did you hear one of them in the play talking about a yacht that cost four million dollars? If he could buy that he certainly could pay the miners more."

"They certainly are stingy," said James, "and I think I'll do something about it when I grow up."

The teacher asked the children which they thought had the greater freedom, the owner who was responsible for all this money, or the worker.

"The owner is freer," John said, "because even if he is responsible for all this money he is never very poor and he can do as he pleases, but the miner can't and is likely to get killed any minute."

The children who had seen the play were much impressed.

In their study of the evolution of life the children began a study of mammals. During the hand-work period, therefore, they decided to draw with crayons pictures of monkeys. A good deal of interesting conversation was carried on during the work. Philip had difficulty since apparently he has little knack for drawing and was aware of his lack of skill.

"I love to draw and I do it pretty well," Robert said. "I like to make curves."

Jean copied the visitor's monkey, much to the annoyance of the artist who kept saying, "Draw your own, Jean, don't copy mine."

Jack, one of the newer members of the class, became much absorbed in his drawing. As he worked, he said, "Oh, I think I would like to be a monkey."

The visitor said, "Mercy, monkeys don't even know that two and two make four. What do you want to be a monkey for?"

Jack said, "I think it would be a happy life."

As he worked, he became baffled when he began to draw the monkey's feet.

The teacher said, "Jack, where are your monkey's feet?"

Jack said, "Oh, I don't know how to make his feet, so I guess I'll have him standing in jungle grass as though his feet were covered." And this he did.

James was much impressed with the visitor's work. He said, "That's a marvelous monkey you have drawn. I couldn't do as well in a hundred years. Why don't you become an artist? It's the best picture I've ever seen."

"Go to Paris and you will see better ones," was the visitor's reply.

James said, "I've been to Paris and never saw any as good as yours."

During the work Jean snatched an eraser from John. John resisted her and leaned across the table to grab it back.

"Is that the way to get things, Jean?" asked the teacher.

"Yes, it is, he wasn't using the eraser," said Jean.

"Well, even if he wasn't using it, wouldn't it be better to ask him for it than to snatch it?" the teacher continued.

"No, he wasn't using it," Jean protested.

The teacher had brought an ABC book with animal illustrations in it. Robert looked the book over and said, "You know I have written an ABC book with verses for each letter. I'm waiting to have it published now."

After the children had finished their work they exhibited their pictures and told interesting things they knew about monkeys. Also, they were critical of each other's work. The visitor, sensing this attitude, said in a rather supercilious tone, "My, you are critical! Nobody is perfect, you know."

As the children were putting on their wraps to go out doors, they began squabbling a bit and the teacher asked them if they would mind waiting until they got out doors to do their scrapping because the room was so small and it made so much confusion. Whereupon the leaders for the day took charge and things went more smoothly. During the play hour, the teacher asked John in a good-natured way if he were sure he had all the "fight" out of him, because she thought it would be well for him to get someone to "scrap" with him until the desire to fight was all out of him so that the class would be free to work when they returned.

"No, it is not all out of me yet," said John quickly. "Robert, will you have a snow fight with me?"

The teacher rather encouraged this fight, feeling that it would be on a good-natured basis of fun. For some time the boys threw snow at each other in good spirit, but John kept up his enthusiasm until finally he rubbed a big handful of snow all over Robert's face. The fight ended with Robert retreating in tears, the teacher realizing that as far as Robert was concerned, the thing had gone beyond the bounds of play.

John laughed at him and said, "Oh, look, Robert's crying."

When the time came to return to the classroom, Robert strolled along in the rear with drooping head, while John walked briskly forward looking more victorious than guilty. When the children were seated in their room, the teacher suggested that they talk a little bit about fighting. She asked John if he felt that it was necessary to carry his fight to the point of hurting the other fellow in order to get the "fight feeling" out of his system.

"Well, I'll tell you about fighting," John began confidently. "I think it is all right as long as you keep it a friendly fight."

"Well, that's just what John never does," interrupted James. "He always likes to fight until he hurts a person and that is when he has most fun."

"What about that, John?" asked the teacher.

"No, I don't think I do," John said, leaning over the table with his head on his arms.

"Well, just think for a minute if perhaps you don't get just a little more pleasure when you feel you have the other fellow down," the teacher continued.

John, lifting his head, smiled, saying, "Yes, I guess I do."

The teacher suggested that this experience reminded her of their discussion on power, because when anyone is fighting and is on top, he is in power for the moment. It would be well, she felt, for the children to remember what they had decided about the use of power.

"Now, I think that fighting is always wrong," James said with assurance. "How can you ever have a perfect society if people fight? If we fight when we are boys and girls, we'll probably fight when we are men. I think it is awful ever to fight."

"Sure you do, because you are a sissy and are afraid to fight, so you say it isn't right to," answered John. "In the club at school you always just hang on to Mr. Jasper's arm. He's always telling you to let go of him. You're just a baby."

The teacher asked James about this. "Don't you ever feel like fighting, James? I want to know now only about your feelings, and not what you think is or isn't right."

Then with evident feeling, James opened up. "I should say I do feel like fighting sometimes. Many is the time

I could just murder somebody until they died. I feel like torturing them, too. You bet I have those feelings. I'd like to fight and fight, but I'm always scared I'll get licked."

"Yes, now you are talking!" piped up John.

"I know how James feels," said Robert, coming to James' rescue. "John always licks the other fellow and, of course, you are scared to fight him. I'm scared to fight, too, because I am always afraid I'll get licked, anyway."

"And what about crying?" the teacher asked. "Don't you think it was rather sensible of Robert just to cry when he felt like it? He didn't cry very much and isn't it lots better to let those feelings out, too?"

"Sure," said the children in assent. The teacher noticed a change coming over Robert. She went on to say, "We all have these same feelings at times. I'm sure we all know how John feels when he wants to fight and how Robert feels when he wants to cry. I am sure I have had both these feelings myself. It is no worse for Robert to feel like crying than it is for John to feel like fighting. The important thing is that we understand our feelings and do not let them run away with us. We must try to keep hold of the reins of all these feelings."

She went on to give the Chinese theory of the "golden mean." She said that it would not be well to give way even to the feeling of laughing so as to laugh all day.

The visitor, in her rather superior way, said, "No, because it would crowd out the earnest thoughts."

Earlier in the discussion, the visitor had been ready with a solution and had said, "If I get in a situation like that I stop and think 'what would Jesus have me do?' "

"Oh, mercy, you had better get out of here," James said. "You're a sixth grader and we don't know what you are talking about. 'What would Jesus have me do?'—what does that mean?"

Throughout the morning the visitor had done not a little preaching, and James finally became impatient. "You just sit here and say this is the thing to do or not to do," he said. "Mrs. Sweet doesn't talk like that. She lets us think about things."

The visitor, not to be daunted, replied, "Well, perhaps I should keep still, because I'm older than you are."

The teacher asked Philip and Jack who had not yet spoken up, what they thought about all this discussion. Jack said that he had a friend last summer who used to fight him until he was nearly choked, but that by the end of the summer they were close friends.

Philip said, "I agree with Robert. I don't like to fight because I'm afraid I'll get licked."

"Why don't you have an idea of your own?" said John.

Since this discussion had taken so much of the period, the teacher read but one short story about primitive life before the children started home.

As they were about to go, James said to John, "I hope you will remember this discussion on fighting in club this week."

"Oh, go on, I'll sock you one now," retorted John. "I hope *you'll* remember it."

Robert said as the class left, "You know, I think I will be a poet or an author or an artist when I grow up."

QUERIES

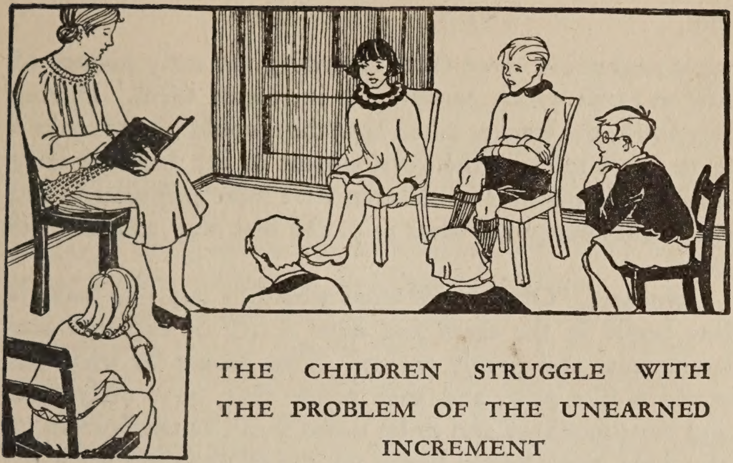
1. What should a teacher do with an out-spoken visitor who does not understand the group? Ignore her or try to give her some conception of what the class is trying to do?

2. Have the children become neutral or more concerned because of the presentation of both sides of the mining situation? Should the teacher have pointed out the attitude that Jesus would probably have taken toward miners and mine owners were he living today?

3. Should the teacher have praised James for displaying an advanced Christian attitude toward war?

4. Why did the children resent the visitor's remark that she would try to do what Jesus would have her do?

5. Did the children of this class learn that it was wrong or right to fight? What did they learn? What should they have learned?



THE CHILDREN STRUGGLE WITH THE PROBLEM OF THE UNEARNED INCREMENT

ALL the children were present today except Robert and in addition there was one guest.

In the junior chapel service, Mr. Knebel raised the question of the basis on which wages should be paid, or privileges and rewards given. Should people receive only what they earn or should they receive what they need, regardless of their earning power? He told a story of a boy of eleven whose father rewarded him for a week's chores with a ticket to the circus. On the other hand, the boy's little sister was allowed to go to the circus without doing any work at all. In contrast to this way of dealing with his own children, the father, the owner of a soap box factory, refused the plea of his workmen for higher wages. His philosophy was that men should be paid exactly what they earned and no more.

Mr. Knebel also told Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard who were all rewarded alike even though some had worked all day whereas others had worked but one hour.

During the hand-work period the children painted pictures suggesting those facts regarding the early history of life on earth which particularly interested them. During this work, the teacher asked how they would like to make a large chart to show the development of life from its early stages up to man. The children were most enthusiastic and all quickly suggested ideas as to the best way to make the chart.

John said, "Oh, I know what would be fun—to make it like layers in the earth and have a city of factories and apartments and people on top. That would be what the world is like now, and then below that, have early men and then monkeys and so on down until, at the bottom of the chart, there would be the sea and all the early sea life."

"Or we could make steps showing the different periods of man," James suggested.

Jean said, "We could do it by first showing the jelly-like life and then gradually work it on down to man."

The teacher suggested to the children that they might show growth by using a picture of a tree. The children thought this sounded interesting and decided to begin next week on some one of these plans.

Meanwhile Philip and Ruth each made a picture of the sun with a piece flying off which represented the earth. John and Jack made pictures of various kinds of sea life. Jean painted the sea and rocks and put in pictures of the first living creatures as she thought they must have looked. James and Elizabeth made steps in a stairway to indicate the development of life.

Following this period there was a discussion of the chapel talk.

Jean said, "Well, he didn't finish the story." This was interesting since Mr. Knebel considered his story as properly ended.

The teacher, without debating the point said, "Well, let's finish the story now. How do you think it should have ended? Do you think the little sister should have been allowed to go to the circus even if she didn't earn the money for her ticket?"

"No, I think she should have earned the money as well as her brother. Girls can do things," said James.

The teacher asked the girls what they thought.

Jean said, "I did lots of work when I was seven. I made beds and helped with dishes and lots of things."

"Mercy, so did I," added Ruth. "I had to take care of my own room when I was seven. I should think there were lots of things the little girl could have done to earn the money for her circus ticket."

The teacher admitted that perhaps the little girl in that story might have done something to earn money for the circus ticket. There was, however, another question to be raised. Was it possible for people to earn money to pay for everything they need? She asked the children if they felt that they earned all the privileges their parents gave them, or whether they thought parents did some things because their children needed those things even though the children hadn't really earned them. The class agreed that many of the things done for them were not earned.

James said, "But now you take factories. If you pay the men what they think they need they'll just be going around saying, 'I need, need, need this and that and everything' and then they will just drive everybody crazy. I think you ought to pay people what they earn and not be so romantic about it."

"Oh, you use big words and don't know what they mean," Philip retorted.

"I guess I do know what they mean," said James.

"Well, I think you ought to decide what to pay people by what they need," was John's clear-cut decision. Turning to James, he said, "What if you were the person? Would you want people to pay you just what they thought was enough and not even ask you how much you should have?"

"If I owned a factory this is what I would do," James began. "I would call in my workers and ask them how much they thought they ought to get. Then I would tell them my side of the story and see if I could pay them what they thought they should get."

The teacher asked James how he thought the workers would judge the amount they ought to receive unless it was according to their needs. She also explained to the children that "need" did not mean a person's wish for anything that he could think of, such as taking trips to Europe every summer. She tried to explain what a reasonable need would be.

"Well, that's all right then," said James, "but if you just say give them what they need, they'll take and take and take and then it will be the owner I will feel sorry for."

Elizabeth said, "My father says that the more you give the workers the more they think they need, so you have to be careful."

"Some people always get left," said Ruth. "My sister always takes more than her share and I have an awful time. We made jelly once and she ate nearly all of it."

The children finally decided that what a person might be allowed to earn ought to be dependent upon his needs, that the amount of wages to be paid ought to be intelligently worked out, and that after both these had been decided upon, workers should take what they earn without complaint.

In discussing Jesus' parable, the children seemed puzzled over the employer's action in giving equal wages for unequal work (Matt. 20: 1-16).

James said, "That was plain silly. Those men that worked such a short time certainly didn't deserve as much as the others. I think that was unfair."

The teacher asked how the other children felt.

John said, "I don't think they should all have been paid the same, either."

The teacher was uncertain about her own interpretation of the parable, and did not know just what to say.

The class then went to Riverside Drive for their recreation period. As soon as they were out of doors, John began scrapping with the other boys, concentrating for the most part on Philip.

"You see John doesn't remember one thing we decided last week about fighting," James complained. "He's worse than ever."

The girls pleaded, "Oh, make him stop, Mrs. Sweet. He just spoils everything."

Since the other children wanted to play, the teacher told John that if he must fight, she would fight with him herself. He said, "All right." The teacher, therefore, carried on a more or less harmless fight with John. His unrest was very noticeable, however, during the entire morning.

After returning to the classroom, the teacher continued the story of the cavemen. The children were absorbed in this and resented interruptions even for discussion.

At one point, when the teacher started to introduce a discussion, James said, "Oh, please just read on, and when we're all through we can talk about it."

A little later Jean said, "Don't stop to talk and ask us things, just read on—it's so interesting."

So the rest of the morning was taken up with the story. The attention of the group was one hundred per cent perfect. John was completely wrapped up in the story, but as soon as the hour closed, he had James down on the floor again.

After the others had gone, the teacher asked John to stay a few minutes for a talk with her. She said, "What about it, John?"

John said, "I don't know. I'd just rather stay home and lie in bed on Sundays. I have to hurry off every day in the week and Sunday is the only day mother is home."

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The teacher felt the children needed to express their ideas about the origin and growth of the universe in some creative way of their own. She suggested, therefore, that they put their ideas into the form of a chart. Because of the interest they already had, the children accepted this teacher-suggested project, revised it, and made it really their own.

QUERIES

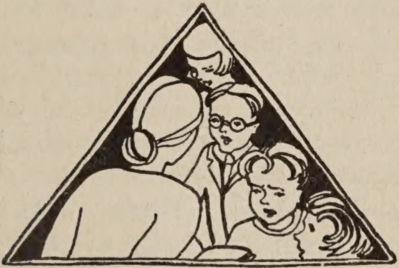
1. Was the school's yearly exhibit a wholesome stimulus to this class?

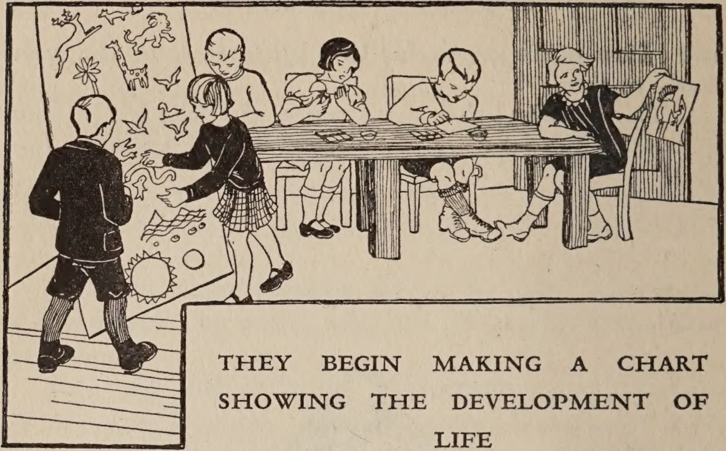
2. Is the problem of the basis on which wages should be determined too difficult for eight-year-old children to be concerned with? Should it have been raised in the chapel service?

3. Was the children's judgment of Jesus' parable as "plain silly" due to their disagreement with the central idea that wages should be determined on the basis of need, or to a misunderstanding of the parable? What about the discussion they had just

had? How might the teacher have presented Jesus' idea more clearly to them?

4. Do you believe there was a reason why John felt he must fight? Can you suggest a possible need which his fighting fulfilled?





THEY BEGIN MAKING A CHART SHOWING THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE

EIGHT children were present today. John and Elizabeth were the absentees.

At the chapel service, Mr. Knebel, wishing to give the children a basis for an appreciation of employers and their problems, told the story of Golden Rule Nash. This included interesting details of Mr. Nash's boyhood, of his struggle as a young man, and of how he came to adopt the Golden Rule in his business.

Following the chapel service, the children went to the handcraft room. They began to work on the big chart they had planned to show the evolution of life on earth. Miss Smedley asked if the children had discussed how they wanted to do it. They told her they had talked it over last week. She thought that John's suggestion of the layers of earth with present-day life on the top was a very good one and the children decided to proceed in that way.

Miss Smedley said, "How shall we begin?"

Philip said, "I'd like to paint the sun and show the world as a small piece of the sun flying off into space. This would be the very beginning." Miss Smedley said that would be fine.

Ruth said, "I'm going to make early sea-life."

Jean said, "I'll make the first jelly-like life that was in the world. Was it sort of yellowish-gray, do you think?"

Ruth said, "I'll make an early mammoth."

James said, "I might make crocodiles."

Since the other children seemed uncertain what to draw, Miss Smedley and the teacher suggested starfish and other forms of sea life.

Grace began making a turtle and Jack worked on an octopus. The children all busied themselves and seemed very keen about this new piece of work.

As the period drew to a close, Philip said, "Let's have us working here in this room on the top layer of the chart to show what life today is like."

Miss Smedley said she didn't think they should confine the last stages of the chart to showing just themselves.

While the work was going on Jean snatched a pencil away from Jack. Although Jack said nothing, the teacher asked Jean if snatching was the best way to get things. "Well, I needed it," said Jean. In spite of the teacher's reminder, Jean did not return the pencil until she was through with it.

When the children returned to their own room, Robert produced several periwinkle shells and a snail shell which he showed to the class. He also had with him a tiny tin box which he had fixed up with a magnifying glass over it, so that it could be used as a little microscope.

Looking through the lens, the children could see that the snail shell had a piece of a soft-shell crab in it. Robert said that crabs often eat snails and that snails crawl into their shells to protect themselves. The teacher asked the children what they thought of the crab's method of getting along in the world.

"Terrible," said Jean. "It's worse than cannibals."

James said, "It's worse than the mine owners."

The teacher said she thought it was interesting to see how animals had worked out their own ways of getting on in the world, and that we might all be glad that we did not have to use the soft-shell crab's way out.

James said, "If we did that we'd all be like robbers going in and stealing everything that anybody had."

When Philip went to look through Robert's microscope, he spilled the whole box of tiny shells all over the floor.

As soon as it happened Robert said, "Never mind, I can pick them up all right. I've done it myself twice." The other children, however, did not allow him to pick up the shells alone.

Afterwards the teacher said, "We have to stop so many times to discuss things that don't go right that I think we might stop now to talk about some things that were very nice this morning."

She spoke of the time in the hand-work room when Jack hadn't said anything when Jean snatched his pencil from him.

The teacher asked, "Did you all notice how nicely Jack took it?"

Jean spoke up immediately, "Jack said, 'Give it back to me.' He wasn't so nice."

The teacher remarked, "I didn't hear Jack object in any way, did any of the rest of you?" They all said that he had not protested.

"Jean just has a guilty conscience and tries to blame Jack because she knows she was the one at fault," declared Ruth.

The teacher said that she was merely trying to commend Jack for his behavior and had not intended to discuss Jean's part in the affair. The teacher asked also what the children thought of the way Robert had behaved when all his shells had been spilled.

James said, "He wasn't sore a bit. He just went to work to pick them up."

The others agreed that Robert had shown a fine spirit. The teacher said she felt it would encourage everyone if their behavior was commented on when it was especially commendable as well as at other times.

Robert took this comment in a very matter-of-fact way and said, "Well, you see I've spilled them before, so I'm used to it."

After this the children discussed the chapel service and all seemed to have been much interested in the story of Golden Rule Nash.

Jean said, "It just shows that if people try to think whether they'd like to have the same thing done to them that they do to other people, why, then everyone would be so happy. Jesus said that was the way for people to do."

"Yes, we've talked about that before and decided it was a pretty good way to do," said James.

"That's the trouble with John at school," said Philip. "He never does think how he would hate to get licked."

"You know it is a funny thing in school that people pay more attention to you if you are bad than if you are good," Ruth said. "When you are good nobody notices you."

"That's right," agreed Philip. "Look at John,—he's always the center of things because he is always having to be punished."

The teacher asked the children if they didn't think that many times people did act in a bad way just to get attention. The children agreed that this is true.

"I think it is nice to have you mention us when we are nice, as you did this morning," said Ruth.

The children then went over to play on Riverside Drive and as they were walking along Philip said, "Gee, I'm glad John isn't here today! He spoiled everything last week."

"So am I," added James. "He just fights and does nothing else."

Upon returning to the classroom, the children went on with their study of early life. The story was about the Sumerians and the first villages, showing the beginnings of social life and of group consciousness with its corresponding effect upon the religion and laws of the people.[1] The children were eager to keep to the story, so there was little discussion. Their interest was quite keen.

QUERIES

1. What do you think of comparing the crab's way of getting on in the world with human living? Did the children see the parallelism?

2. Was it good for Robert to be singled out for approval? Was there any evidence later in the session that the children had appreciated the teacher's purpose?

3. In dealing with a situation in which a child had shown a desirable attitude and had done a social act, the teacher drew out comment to the effect that the spirit shown had been "fine" or that the child had behaved in a "nice" way. Suppose instead of merely praising the conduct, she had led the children to consider the consequences of the conduct; would the appreciation of the group have been lessened or would it have increased? Would the effect on the person commended have been more helpful or less so?

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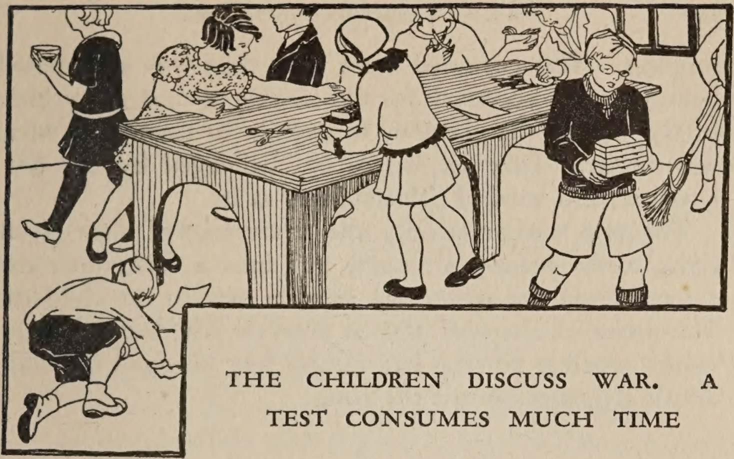
[1] See *In the Beginning*, by Eva Erleigh.



THE CHILDREN DISCUSS WAR. A TEST CONSUMES MUCH TIME

Six children were present today. At the chapel service Mr. Knebel told the story of Robert Owen, the English employer who pioneered in the struggle to bring about better conditions for factory workers.

Following the service the children went to Miss Smedley's room for their hand-work period. As they were beginning the new chart showing the earth's development, Miss Smedley asked the children to remain longer than usual in order to get it well started. They were eager to begin pasting and Jean became the official paster for the day.

Philip began making a picture of a dug-out. He said, "I'm better at machines and explosives and airplanes and things like that than at making live things."

Grace seemed to find it hard to decide what to make. James worked at drawing turtles and Jack finished the sea animals he had begun the previous week. The children worked with intense interest. When it came time to stop they put their work materials away quickly and efficiently.

The giving of the following test took up the next forty minutes. This occupied more time than was anticipated because it was necessary for the teacher to read everything in the test to the children to explain to them just what was meant. They seemed to be challenged by the test, however, and worked painstakingly at it.

The test was practically the equivalent of that given eight weeks before, although put into a form different enough from the earlier test to seem new to the children. The desire of the staff was to discover whether the eight weeks' worship services had in any way changed the children's attitudes toward the poor.

I

Since Sunday, January 22, we have had eight worship services about workmen. Which do you think were the best?

Mark XX in front of the one you thought best.
Mark X in front of the one you thought second best.
Mark O in front of the one you thought worst.

....January 22.—Mr. Glovak, a miner, spoke about the sufferings of the miners.
....January 29.—Mr. Knebel told how it might be possible that some of us might own part of a mine.
....February 5.—Mr. Tippet spoke on how the miners lived when he was a boy in a mining camp, and how conditions had since changed.
....February 12.—Mr. Webber told about the strike of the paper-box factory workers.
....February 19.—A play was given by the sixth- and seventh-grade boys.
....February 26.—A story was told about how Betty went to the circus, although she didn't work to earn her ticket.
....March 4.—A story was told about Golden Rule Nash.
....March 11.—A story was told about Robert Owen.

II

(*Directions:* Check with a "T" all the answers below which you think are true. When you have finished, put a "TT" in front of the one which is most often true.)

SOME PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO LIVE ON—

. . . . because they do not like to work.
. . . . because they are honest and do not cheat.
. . . . because they are not bright enough.
. . . . because they do not get paid as much as they deserve.
. . . . because they have more sickness in their families than most people.
. . . . because there are not jobs enough to go around so every man can have one.
. . . . because they want people to be sorry for them, so they do not try hard to make more money.
. . . . because God wants us to be kind. He always has poor people in the world so that we can have someone to help.
. . . . because they have too many children.
. . . . because some people take all the money they can get without thinking about whether there will be enough to go around or not.

III

(*Directions:* Finish this story as you would if it really happened to you.)

Our recreation club went out into the park and found three boys about our age playing ball in the place which we usually use. They were very poorly dressed and tough-looking. Jerry, who was with our club, called out,

"Hey, you tough guys, get out of our ball diamond!"

The three boys stopped playing and looked as though they didn't know whether to fight all of us or to run off.

How would you feel if you were in the recreation club? What would you do? What would you say?

....

....

....

....

IV

(*Directions:* First mark with a "T" the sentence printed in capital letters which you think is true. Put a "TT" in front of the one sentence printed in small letters which is most true.)

IF THE MINERS ARE IN NEED NEXT CHRISTMAS AND MY CLASS IS ASKED TO HELP THEM I THINK I SHALL GIVE SOMETHING TO THEM—

....because the Bible says that we should give to the poor.
....because if I don't give something, the rest of the class will think I am selfish.
....because the miners deserve to have food and clothes and nice homes even if they can't afford them.
....because I feel so much better when I give to poor people.
....because I want to help them win their strike.
....because I hate to think how the miners suffer.

I SHALL PROBABLY NOT GIVE ANYTHING TO THE MINERS AGAIN—

....because we are asked to give so much at school.
....because I think the miners ought to earn their own money.
....because if the miners aren't earning enough money they ought to go somewhere else and get better jobs.
....because I can think of better ways to help them than by giving them things.
....because most of the miners are not American anyway.

V

(*Directions:* First mark with a "T" one of the sentences printed in capital letters; then mark with a "T" all the sentences under this that you think are true. Put a "TT" in front of the one sentence which is the most true.)

The Miners' Relief Committee suggested that we might have several children of miners come up from Pennsylvania to live in our homes and to go to our Sunday school for two weeks.

I DO NOT THINK THIS IS A GOOD PLAN—

. . . . because my parents say that I might learn bad habits from the miners' children.
. . . . because I would feel uncomfortable when I see them or hear about them.
. . . . because I would be ashamed if my friends saw me with them.
. . . . because they would not be happy here away from home.
. . . . because I'm tired of miners and want to hear about something else.
. . . . because they would become dissatisfied with their own homes if they saw how nice ours are.

I THINK THIS IS A GOOD PLAN—

. . . . because the miners' children could learn from us how to live like nice people.
. . . . because I want to know what miners' children are like.
. . . . because I would enjoy showing them all the things I can do.
. . . . because they probably know a lot of interesting things that I would like to learn.
. . . . because they would have a good time after all their suffering in the mining towns.

Do not sign your name. Hand your paper to the teacher.

When the children were through taking the test, Jean said, "Why, it says not to sign your name but I want to. I want people to know this is mine."

So the teacher told her she might sign her name if she wished. Others expressed the same desire to sign their names and a number of the children did so.

During the play period the children went over to the campus and made a snow man. They had a very peaceful time.

Upon their return it was nearing noon so the children asked for a story instead of discussion. They went on with their history and had stories about the early Cretans and Greeks. The children were keen with interest.

After hearing descriptions of warfare in those days, Philip said, "Goodness, we have lots more efficient ways of fighting today with airplanes and submarines and everything."

The teacher said, "What do you think of war as a way of settling problems?"

"It's awful," said James. "It never settles a thing. It just stirs up more trouble."

"The worst thing is when countries go to war with each other. It always makes things worse," said Jean.

The other children agreed that war is a poor way to settle anything.

James said, "The Greeks hadn't learned anything better, but we really know better today, and yet look at the Great War."

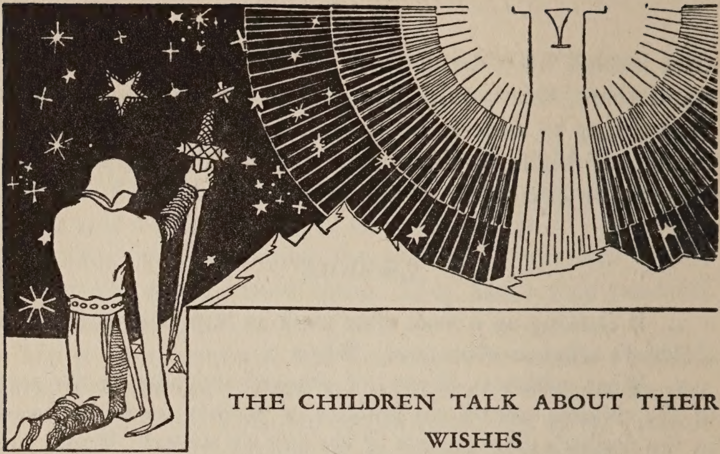
Ruth said, "I know it. We're Germans and it was awful." The teacher emphasized the point the children had been making that there are better ways of settling human problems than by fighting. She explained that if we would try to understand other people and other countries instead of judging them before we come to understand them, this would help a great deal, just as we had been trying to understand the miners and the mine owners instead of blaming the miners for striking or the mine owners for not doing all the miners asked.

QUERIES

1. Is cleaning up a room after work an important activity in children's religious education? Why?

2. What evidences, if any, of changed attitudes on the part of the children toward the problem of poverty are to be found in the teacher's diary records of the past six weeks? Would you consider these evidences more or less trustworthy than the results of the special test?

3. When telling stories of Cretans and Greeks would you have expected to find a natural opportunity to open up the question of war as a fruitful method of settling problems? Might some of the Old Testament stories of war be used in the same way?



THE CHILDREN TALK ABOUT THEIR WISHES

It was a stormy Sunday and only four children were present, Jean, Grace, Janet and Philip. Jean was the only one who had arrived when the chapel service began. She whispered to the teacher as they marched down the aisle, "I wish nobody else would come today—we could have fun, just the two of us."

Someone had suggested that the school learn the following song:

Follow the Gleam

(In *The Song Book of the* Y.W.C.A.)

To knights in the days of old,
Keeping vigil on mountain height,
Came a vision of Holy Grail
And a voice through the waiting night.
  Follow, follow, follow the gleam!
  Banners unfurled o'er all the world.
  Follow, follow, follow the gleam
  Of the Chalice that is the Grail.

And we who would serve the King,
And loyally Him obey,
In the consecrate silence know
That the challenge still sounds today.
  Follow, follow, follow the gleam!
  Standards of worth o'er all the earth,
  Follow, follow, follow the gleam
  Of the light that shall bring the dawn.

In order to make this song meaningful, Mrs. Fahs wove the morning's worship service around the learning of this song and made the theme of our wishes and their meanings the central motif.

She told briefly an original story, written by one of the children, about a little train and a big train that ran a race. Into this story the boy had put his own big wish to come out ahead. The writer was the little train and his bigger brother was the big train. It was very, very hard for the younger brother to get ahead of his older brother. In the story his wish came true.

Mrs. Fahs told the children that grown-ups as well as children put their wishes into stories. Sometimes people are afraid to talk frankly about their wishes; sometimes their wishes are so big, they do not know how to put them into plain every-day words. So they talk about their wishes by using symbols to represent them. The two trains in the boy's story were symbols of the two brothers.

A well-known "wish" story that has been told for hundreds of years is the story of the Holy Grail. The Holy Grail stands for the finest wish any one could wish. It is a "symbol." This story Mrs. Fahs told briefly.

Then she talked a little about the new song and suggested that as the children sang it they should think of the "Holy Grail" as standing for their own finest wish.

After the singing, Dr. Charlton played a selection from the opera "Parsifal." Then Mrs. Fahs told the story of Parsifal.

As a child Parsifal was protected by his mother from all sight of suffering and war, and was made afraid to ask questions. Yet he wished above all else to ask questions and to learn about the big world beyond the walls of his mother's estate. He did not wish to be protected from anything that would help him to become the bravest and finest man he might be. Finally, Parsifal adventured forth into the world as a knight, without his mother's knowledge. He faced hardships, dangers, and temptations to take his ease. At last, he found a castle which was under an evil enchantment. He caught a momentary glimpse of the Holy Grail but he was unable to banish the enchantment because he was afraid to ask the one question he wanted above all to ask. He was obliged to leave the castle; he lost his way and spent many years wandering, struggling, and facing dangers. Finally, once more he found the castle, he gained the courage to ask his question, and the enchantment was banished.

"What is the question above all questions which you would like to have answered? What is the wish above all wishes which you would like to gain?" These were the questions which the leader of the service left in the minds of the children.

During the hand-work period the children continued to work on their chart. Janet drew a giraffe and a duck, Philip worked on his dug-out, Grace painted ducks, and Jean took charge of the pasting. The children seemed greatly interested in watching their chart grow.

Following the hand-work period they had a discussion of the chapel service. Jean said, "I certainly did like that story, and I love to sing, 'Follow the Gleam.' "

Philip said, "I love to sing that song, too; it's about the best one we sing."

Janet and Grace both spoke up in the same breath and said, "I love that song, too."

The teacher asked the children if they ever had any big wishes they thought about a lot but didn't talk about.

They all said they had and she asked them if each would write a poem or a story about it today.

Jean said, "I'll tell mine, but I don't want to write it because it might not be any good."

The teacher said, "If you really express yourself and your own feelings, what does it matter whether anyone else thinks it is good or not?"

Jean said, "Well, I'll tell you my wishes. I wish that there would always be peace and no fighting. And if I had a second wish it would be that I had curly hair."

Grace said, "My big wish is that everybody in the world could be happy."

Philip said, "My wish is to be an aviator."

"My only wish is to be with my daddy and I'd like to write a poem about it," said Janet.

The teacher gave the children pencils and papers and told them they might write about their wishes if they liked. Janet wrote the following verse:

My Biggest Wish

I wish I could be with my daddy,
With my daddy I could be,
I'd stay with him, I'd keep him,
I wouldn't let him go.
That's my biggest wish.

"I wish I could be an aviator when I grow up because I am interested in airplanes." This was Philip's wish.

"I wish there was peace everywhere and that there wasn't any fighting at all," wrote Grace.

Jean wrote, "I wish that there would always be peace and no fighting."

During the writing, Jean asked, "Are you writing your biggest wish, Mrs. Sweet? I thought teachers always did what the children did."

It was so stormy today that the children could not go out for their recreation period, so the teacher suggested that they write notes to Elizabeth who had been sick. They all set to work and wrote notes, except Philip who drew pictures of airplanes for her. When they had finished they were eager to read their notes aloud. This was done.

The story hour followed and the class began a study of the Hebrew people following that of the Greeks and Phœnicians of last week. The teacher read a chapter describing the early Hebrew shepherds and telling how most of them originally had been hill-men. She told how these shepherds travelled from place to place to find pasturage for their flocks, and how when they were resting in the evening some of them used to sing songs in which they expressed their thoughts and feelings. She said that some of the psalms in the Old Testament were doubtless first sung by such men and that these psalms were the beginnings of Hebrew poetry.

Janet said, "Oh, I love the psalms. I read one this morning, the One Hundred and Twenty-first."

The teacher said that was a lovely psalm, and repeated a little of it for the children, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the Lord." She asked the children to try to picture a group of tired shepherds out in the open looking up at the hills and getting strength and comfort from them. She asked the children if they knew the Twenty-third Psalm. They repeated it together fairly well. The teacher asked the children why they thought the poet called the Lord his shepherd.

Jean said, "Why, because they were shepherds and were looking after their sheep and they thought of God as their shepherd and all of us as his sheep."

Janet said, "Can't we bring our Bibles next time and read some more?" The teacher assured her that she would be glad to have them bring their Bibles. They all agreed to do so.

Then the teacher told the story of Abraham as one of the foremost of these early Hebrew shepherds and of his vision of a better God than those who were worshipped in Ur. The children were alert.

Jean said, "I know what will be fun when we finish the chart we are making—to make another showing how man's religion has changed. We could have idols and shrines and everything."

The teacher told the children that they might consider doing this after they had finished their present work.

Janet said, "My mother will be glad to hear we are going to study the Bible. She says my brother just learns about miners and I do all this nature work and she wishes one of us could have the Bible."

"Why does Janet always come telling us what her mother thinks we ought to do?" said Jean. "That isn't the way we do things here. She always says, 'My mother says this and that.' It isn't for her to say what we shall do."

The teacher said she thought it was fine for the mothers to take an interest even though the class were deciding for themselves what they should do.

"Why doesn't Janet get some ideas of her own?" asked Jean.

"I do," explained Janet, "but I thought I would tell you what mother said."

The teacher pointed out to the children that the Bible material fitted in at this place in their study of the history of the world and that by taking it up in this way they could see it in its proper chronological setting. She elaborated on this point fully and suggested that the children share it with their parents.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The teacher obviously evaded the children's request that she, too, should express her biggest "wish." By failing to meet their request she was setting herself apart from the group. A frank and open expression of a "wish" would have been wiser.

The teacher, realizing the importance of an understanding approach to life, tried to help the children to develop an appreciation of the people of the past, as was evidenced in the discussion of shepherd life today.

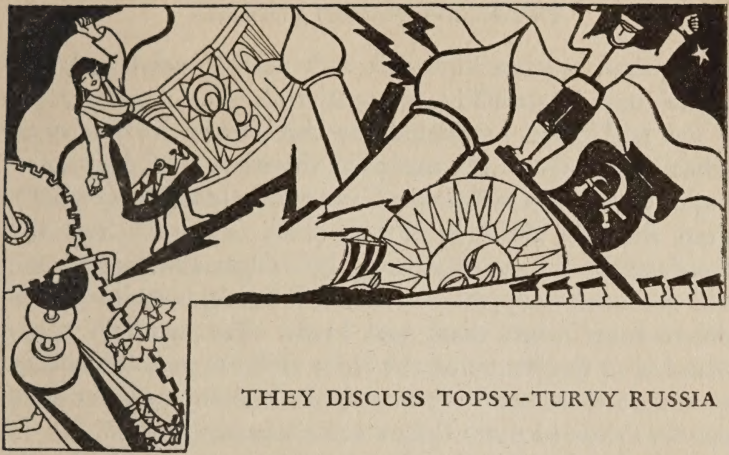
The Bible material was introduced in its proper chronological setting in this session. The value to children of having Biblical material presented to them in this way lies in the fact that they are able to view the ideas in the light of the age and of the general development of the times rather than as inspired words which appear quite unrelated to the environment of the period in which they were written.

QUERIES

1. Was Janet's mother justified in her criticism of the school?

2. Should the teacher have depended on the children to explain to their parents her point of view about the use of the Bible?

3. How do you explain the fact that these children seemed so eager to study the Bible?



THEY DISCUSS TOPSY-TURVY RUSSIA

THERE were seven children present today, Robert, John, Elizabeth, Ruth, Jack, Grace and James. All arrived in time for the chapel service.

The principal, realizing that certain parents of children in the school had unusually wide and rich experiences, began planning to have some of these as speakers in the children's worship services. She believed that such parents might make very stimulating contributions to the children's thinking, and furthermore she realized that the sense of family fellowship which such coöperation usually brings might be an added asset in the work of the school. Dr. James G. McDonald, chairman of the Foreign Policy Association, who had spent considerable time in Russia, was the first of these parent speakers. He was asked to describe for the children, in as concrete a way as possible, how the Russians are trying to solve the problem of poverty. He was asked not to make an effort to convince the children that the experiment was either desirable or undesirable. The staff felt that the children should know about the situation in Russia as a daring and large-scale experiment in social reconstruction.

Dr. McDonald fascinated the children by his stories of what he had seen. He made the situation vivid by speaking of conditions in Russia as being even more topsy-turvy than those in *Alice in Wonderland.* He told how the Russians, in trying to even up privileges and opportunities for everybody, had turned relationships quite upside down from what these had been. The workers commandeered the homes of the rich; children were at liberty to choose their teachers; everybody had to work; and no one was allowed more than a certain income.

Directly after the chapel, the children went to the handwork room to continue chart making. Several of the children had been absent for a few Sundays and were interested to discover the progress which had been made.

Robert said, "Why, there is my mammoth up there. I guess I'll make a reindeer today." Whereupon he set to work.

John said it looked as if they needed more birds, so he started making birds.

James said, "Oh, I want to make New York City with the apartments"; so he began to draw pictures for the final topmost section.

Elizabeth made a lion and the other children made birds of several varieties.

The period was followed by a discussion based on the chapel talk. The teacher asked, "What do you think of Russia?"

"I should say that it was a good deal more topsy-turvy than *Alice in Wonderland* ever was," said James. "It seems to me that for all the poor people to rise up and push everybody out is as bad as having the rich ones do it.

Imagine those schools where the children can just kick a teacher out if they don't like her. Why isn't that just as bad as having it the other way round?"

"It seems to me that's going too far, too," said Robert. "Why couldn't they have the teacher ask the children what they want to study and everything, but then have her there to direct it. I'd hate to be in a class that some child just got up and led. You know the school I'd like to go to is out west where they have a good teacher for every subject, and then you just decide what you want to learn and go to her. If you want French you go to a French class, or if you want arithmetic you do the same. There is no promoting or anything like that."

"Imagine our putting out the principal at Horace Mann!" exclaimed Jack. At this thought, the other children broke into peals of laughter.

The teacher explained that according to this new spirit in Russia children should be respected as well as grown-ups and should have a share in deciding what they wish to study and to learn.

"My mother says that children ought to consider the grown-ups all the time," said Ruth.

The teacher said that children should consider grown-ups just as grown-ups should consider children, and that each should be helped to understand the other.

The teacher asked what they thought of poor people taking things into their own hands and starting a new way of living together.

"Well, if the poor people are just going to get cocky like the rich ones," James asserted, "I don't see any difference."

The teacher pointed out that when the poor people of Russia got into power they did not take all the wealth and drive the rich people as slaves. What they did was to insist that everyone must work and earn his own living and that no one should receive more than a certain amount of salary, so that there would be enough for everyone to have a share of the good things of life.

James said, "Oh, I see—it's a kind of balance they're after."

"What became of all the rich people?" asked Ruth.

The teacher explained that they had the alternative of working with the rest of the people of the country or of leaving Russia and that many had left and had gone to other countries.

"I think Russia has the right idea," said John emphatically. "Everyone should have enough and yet nobody needs too much."

"I think so too," agreed Grace.

Following this discussion the children went over to the campus to play. There was a fine spirit in the group. John seemed to take his place as naturally as though he had not been absent and the children were all friendly in their play.

As so many of the children had not been present the previous Sunday, the teacher suggested repeating last week's Bible stories of the Hebrews. The children agreed that this would be a good plan. As the teacher was telling how the shepherds travelled from place to place to find better pasturage for their flocks and how they would sit by their campfires to rest and to sing songs about the life they led, the children became very thoughtful. The teacher pictured groups of these ancient people sitting under the open sky, wondering about things which man had wondered about since time began, while some would weave their thoughts into beautiful poems such as the psalms. The teacher asked the children if they had ever felt as the shepherds probably did.

"I have lots of times and I do just what they did," said Robert. "I write little poems. Lots of times things seem so wonderful to me that I just have to write a poem about them."

The teacher asked if all the children felt this way and they said they did. She said it brought the centuries together in a very wonderful way—to think that boys and girls today knew what it meant to wonder about the beauty of the world and the mystery and the awesomeness of it just as people did centuries and centuries ago. Then the teacher went on with the story of Abraham, one of the first great Hebrews.

"I have been reading about him in my Bible book at home," John told the class.

The teacher said that was fine and that John might have details to add to the story. The class were discussing Abraham's caravan as he prepared it to start from Ur. The children were asked if they knew why these shepherds used camels so much.

John said, "It's because the camels have big padded feet that don't get hot and tired in the sand of the desert. A camel can keep water down in his throat about ten days, and his nose has a thing in it so that he doesn't have to breathe the sand in a wind storm—something closes."

The teacher asked John where he got all this interesting information about the camel. He said, "I read it in a book, called *The Wonderland of the Jungle.*"

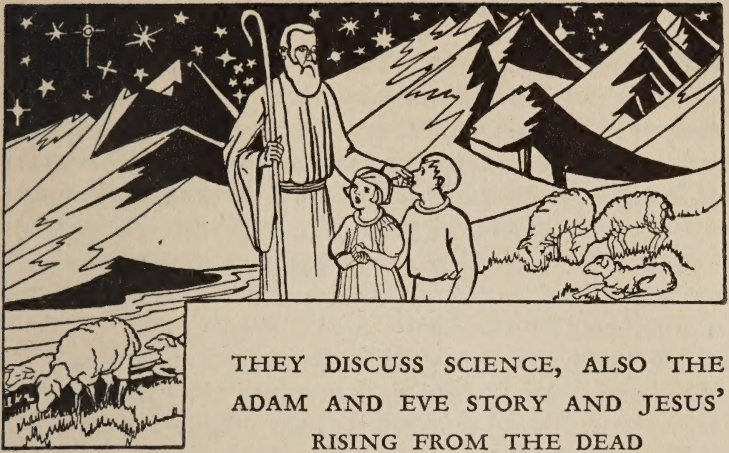
The teacher had brought a map to show the children the place from which Abraham's caravan started. She gave them an idea of what the country was like, having once been there herself. During the telling of the story, she said that Abraham wished to find a new country in order that he might find better grazing land for his flocks, but even more he wished to find a better God to worship than those which the people of his land were worshipping.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The speaker of the morning gave a remarkably interesting talk on Russia in terms which, for the most part, the children understood. Yet to describe simply a situation so complex as that in Russia without creating misconceptions was well-nigh impossible. The teacher felt that it was her function, if possible, to help the children to clear up their thinking and to correct unfair interpretations.

QUERIES

1. Did the teacher make the best use of the children's desire to bring their Bibles as expressed the previous Sunday?
2. In a series of worship services dealing with the solution of the problem of poverty in our day, was the introduction of a talk on Russia a wise venture? Should children be introduced to so complex a problem?
3. What are the advantages in using parents as speakers in the church school worship services? How would you guard against possible misunderstandings?



THEY DISCUSS SCIENCE, ALSO THE ADAM AND EVE STORY AND JESUS' RISING FROM THE DEAD

TODAY was Palm Sunday and there were seven children present, Jean, Philip, John, James, Grace, Ruth and Elizabeth. Jack had the measles. The point of chief interest in the chapel service was the reading of an original story by Margaret Rusk, one of the fourth-grade girls. It was entitled, "Poverty's Children," and was a story of the life of a miner's family, and had been directly inspired by the chapel service six weeks before when a miner had spoken to the school.

When discussing the miner's talk, Margaret had said, "Someone ought to write a story about the miners such as Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote about the slaves." "Why don't you write one yourself, Margaret?" was the answer the children made to her. Nothing more was said on the subject. Eight weeks later, Margaret appeared on Sunday morning, with a manuscript and gave it to Mr. Osborne saying, "Here's the story."

Margaret read it to her own class that morning, and for twenty minutes they listened with almost breathless attention, as she read chapter after chapter of her dramatic narrative. On learning what had happened, the principal asked Margaret to read the story to the rest of the children at today's chapel service.

Following this service of worship, the class had a period of hand-work with Miss Smedley. When they went into the room and looked at the chart, John said, "I don't like having New York City at the top that way. New York isn't the whole world, so why should we use it to represent the top scale in evolution?"

"Well, for pity's sake, John," said James. "You were the one in the beginning that suggested it. The way we've done this whole chart has been following your idea."

"I can't help it," insisted John. "Now that I see it this way it doesn't look right to see New York at the top as if it were the whole world."

The teacher suggested that the life in New York perhaps represented man's progress as well as would anything else in the world, and that perhaps they might use New York City to represent the highest that had been achieved, although, as John said, New York City isn't the whole world.

The other children were also critical. They decided to add to James' drawing of the city, by making taxis, buses, airplanes, etc. Everyone worked hard. Elizabeth drew an American Indian to represent early man. Her work throughout this chart-making had been of a high order. She always knew what she wanted to picture and she achieved good effects in her work.

After this period the children discussed the chapel service. The teacher asked them how they enjoyed the story.

James said, "I thought it was awfully good, only I didn't like the way Margaret mixed what was real with all that imaginary business at the end, calling the president 'Mr.

Skinflint,' and the first woman president, 'Mrs. Goodwill.' Why didn't she keep it all real to the end?"

John said, "It was all imaginary, so what's the difference? And maybe the 'Coalson' girl did marry a man named 'Goodwill.' "

"Oh, no, there isn't such a name," James insisted, "and anyway, whoever heard of 'Mr. Skinflint'?"

The teacher asked the children what they thought was the point of the story.

Jean said, "Margaret was writing about the life of miners and showing what a hard time they have. I thought it was very good. I couldn't do so well."

Elizabeth said, "It made you feel sorry for the miners; they have such a hard life. Imagine having seventeen children!"

John had brought his Bible today and presently opened it to look for the Psalms. The teacher asked if the children would like to read a psalm together before they went outdoors. They asked for the Twenty-third Psalm. So the teacher gave the setting by telling the children to imagine an early Hebrew shepherd out under the stars watching his flocks at night and having a feeling of safety and well-being at the close of the day as all his sheep were safe in spite of hardships met. Perhaps Abraham and his caravan had sung such songs on their long journey from Ur.

After reading the Psalm, the children went back over it and thought about each verse and its meaning.

Philip said, "Everything that the shepherds were doing to look after their sheep, they imagined the Lord was doing to look after them."

"I know it," added John. "And they were hunting pastures for their flocks and so they thought the Lord was leading them to green pastures. And they had staffs to keep their sheep in place and that's why they say the Lord has a staff. Lots of times baby sheep would fall off places, and then the shepherds would use the crooked hooks on their staffs to pull the sheep up."

After this the children went over to Riverside Drive to play. They had a good time, although on the way back John and James quarreled a good deal. The teacher stopped them once to ask if they remembered what they had decided about the time to stop playing. Was it to be in the park or after the class were back in the classroom? The boys answered, "In the park."

Nevertheless, the quarreling continued and became rather violent upon the return of the children to their room. The teacher suggested that everybody sit down and talk about it.

"Well, John just teased me until I couldn't stand it," explained James. "I'd like to lick him good."

The teacher reminded the boys of the earlier discussions in which they had decided that a friendly fight was all right if it did not go any further, and she reminded them again of their discussion to stop the play out of doors. The children were asked what was likely to happen if they went on fighting all the way home.

"We might easily get killed," said James.

She asked if the children had seen what happened to Professor Elliott's table when they came into the room quarrelling? It had almost been knocked over. The boys had failed to notice this but the teacher called their attention to it and showed how serious an accident might have happened.

After this discussion, the teacher read more of the story of Abraham, depicting possible events on the first day's caravan journey from Ur, and, describing how when evening came the travelers made camp, and rested. Included in this narrative[1] was the creation story from Genesis given as though Abraham had told it to his people around the camp-fire at night. This renewed an earlier discussion.

James said, "You see, the Bible tells you one thing about how the world was made and science tells you another. How are we going to know what to believe?"

Since James had not yet joined the class at the time when they had previously discussed the Hebrew creation story, the teacher tried once more to describe the natural human setting in which the Biblical narrative had grown. She explained that these people in 2000 B.C. wondered about the beginning of the world just as we do today, but that they knew much less than we do about how things came to be. Abraham possibly told this story of creation to his people, and today the class were telling the story of the world's creation through this chart they had made showing life developing slowly from early jelly-like forms. The children saw how people's ideas change as knowledge and understanding increase. The teacher tried to lead them to appreciate the early Hebrews' conception of creation even though this could not now suffice as an accurate explanation.

James said, "Well, how do we know but that something entirely different will be discovered some day about how the world was made?"

The teacher said, "In this world of change and growth it is very possible that our ideas will change when more things have been discovered about the world."

"Well, I'm not going to bank all my faith on science," said James emphatically. "It can't tell you where that jelly-like life came from any more than the Adam and Eve story."

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[1] See *How the Early Hebrews Lived and Learned*, by Edna M. Bonser.

"Who made God then?" asked Ruth. "We think we know everything, but we always get to something we can't answer."

The teacher told her this was quite true, and that all through our lives we would be searching to discover more and more.

"Well, God isn't a person," Philip said, "He's a great energy back of all the world, or a spirit if you want to call it that, but He isn't a person."

"Yes, He is a person because He came to the world," James said.

"No, He didn't," answered Philip. "You are thinking of Jesus."

"Well, they are the same," said James.

"Mercy, no," said Philip. "Jesus was a man that lived and he came to the world, but God is the energy back of everything. He isn't a person, I tell you."

"Why, don't you see, James?" said Jean. "Jesus was a baby born just like all of us and he lived in the world and died just like any of us. But God is somebody different."

The teacher asked for comments from the others.

Grace said, "I think as Philip does, that God is the spirit back of it all. We don't know just what He's like."

The teacher suggested that the children think about this question during the week and perhaps talk with their parents about it.

Then she went on with the story, as given in Mrs. Bonser's book, of Neth, the Scout, who, by his cleverness, saved Abraham's caravan from robbers.

"How do you suppose they swam in those days?" asked John. "What do you suppose their strokes were like?"

The teacher said she imagined they first learned to swim by watching animals and by copying them and that very likely Neth swam dog-paddle as most animals do.

The teacher asked the children if they thought God could have protected Abraham and his followers from the robbers if Neth hadn't been on the job. She reminded them of the Psalms and of how those who wrote them felt that the Lord was taking care of them so that they need "fear no evil."

"Well, the Lord means for us to help," said Jean. "Of course, He couldn't protect Abraham's caravan from robbers unless they had looked out for themselves."

"God could have if He had wanted to," James insisted.

Philip said, "I don't think God could. People have to look after themselves."

"I think the way God looks after us is to give us sense enough to look after ourselves." Such was Jean's philosophy.

"Well, I think God wants people to help themselves," admitted James, "and then if they have tried and are still having a bad time, and if they are good people, He helps them."

The teacher asked, "Well, why do you suppose God doesn't help the miners now?"

"Maybe they don't believe in Him," answered John.

The teacher asked the children if they thought that a loving God would help only the people who believed in Him.

"No, that wouldn't be right," said James. "But He could just help the good ones. If a man was wicked and being sent to jail, I'm sure God wouldn't help him."

The teacher asked how we can tell who are good and who are bad. She pointed out that many people think the Russians are bad because of what they are doing today, while others think they are good. She said it isn't always easy to tell just where to draw the line between good and bad.

James said, "Well, God can, though."

Elizabeth said, "I think like James does."

Philip said, "I don't. I believe like Jean does, that God can't just step in and help but that He has made us so we can work things out for ourselves."

"That's what I think, too," said John.

Grace agreed to this, too, but James and Elizabeth held to their view.

Just as the class were preparing to go home they began a discussion of Easter, since the teacher mentioned the fact that the following Sunday would be Easter.

"Jesus didn't really rise from the dead," said Philip. "His friends just thought they saw him."

"He did, too," James said emphatically.

"Why, he did not, James," said Philip. "What's the matter with you? He was a man and died like anybody does and his spirit went where everybody's spirit goes. How could he come to life?"

"Perhaps he wasn't really dead at all those three days," suggested John.

Getting up and shaking his fist at Philip, James said, "Jesus did, too, rise from the dead."

As the hour was late the teacher suggested that they go home and that the next Sunday they would talk about the Easter story.

QUERIES

1. Has the approach to God through an appreciation of the wonder and mystery in life been made before in this course? Has it been effective? In teaching under ordinary conditions is such an approach possible?

2. How do you suppose John felt about bringing his Bible to Sunday school after today's session? Would it have been better to give stars to those who brought their Bibles?

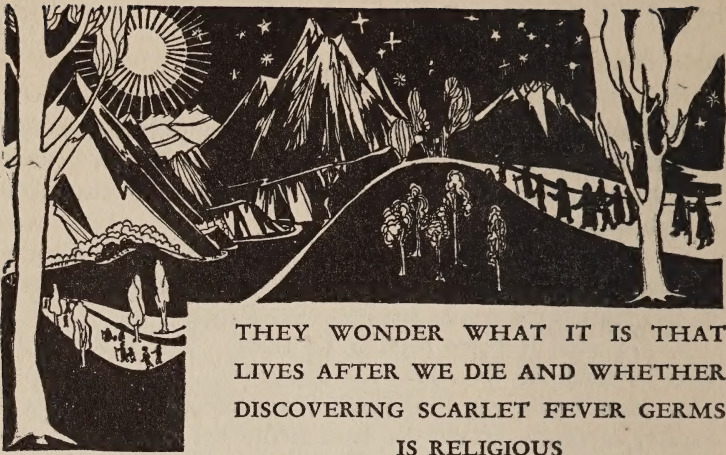
3. On what is James banking his faith? Why is it that he cares so much for the Adam and Eve story?

4. How would you have handled this discussion on the personality of God? Would you have settled the question by presenting Jesus' thought as the best we know about God? Or would you also have suggested the need of a continued quest?

5. Which child do you think is the more likely to lose his faith as he grows older, Philip or James?

6. Would you have raised the question of God's care as this teacher did or would you have assumed it?

7. Why is it that James has so much emotion attached to his beliefs? Is such an emotionalized faith desirable or undesirable?



THEY WONDER WHAT IT IS THAT LIVES AFTER WE DIE AND WHETHER DISCOVERING SCARLET FEVER GERMS IS RELIGIOUS

THERE were seven children present, including John, Jean, Philip, James, Grace, Janet, and Ruth. Elizabeth and Jack were both reported ill.

There was a special chapel service for Easter with special music. Mr. Knebel led the service, the central idea being man's wish that life may be eternal. He told the children a little of what biological science has to tell us about the possibility of life after death. He showed two charts picturing single cells, and what happens to them when they die. Physical death was presented thus graphically as change rather than as annihilation. Mr. Knebel also told the story of Jesus' resurrection, suggesting that possibly the story might have come down to us because of the strong yearning of Jesus' followers to see him again and because of their deep conviction that so great and fine a spirit could not die.

Following the chapel service, the children spent a period working on their chart. Jean and Janet, however, left to go to church with their parents. All the other children became interested in trying their hand at airplanes until

Miss Smedley pointed out to them that there were certain spaces in the chart which needed filling in. The teacher suggested that each take a good look at the chart to see what could be added to it.

John thought that a crocodile was needed in the section showing sea life and he set to work to make one. Philip made a sea-horse, Ruth drew a robin in a tree, and the other children sketched various objects to fill in the spaces. At the close of the period Miss Smedley asked the children to decide on the labelling for their chart, so upon returning to the classroom they discussed what they would call it.

James said, "I think 'The Ladder of Life' would be good."

Ruth said, "I think 'How the World Developed' would be good."

Grace said, "I think 'From the Beginning Up Until Now,' would be good, too."

John said, "I think to call it 'How Man Developed' would be fine."

Philip said, "Well, that wouldn't be just right because we are showing how the whole world developed and not just man."

John said, "That's right, Philip. I guess this would be better—'How the World Developed Up Until Now.' "

Ruth said, "Yes, that's the best."

They all agreed to this until John said, "But that looks as though we thought that the world had stopped developing now, and what we mean is that that's how it has developed up until 1928."

So the teacher suggested that they change his words to "How the World Developed Up Until 1928."

John said, "But you know there is a man right now trying to get to Venus and if he got there in 1928 that would be a whole new development that wasn't on our chart and then it wouldn't be right."

The teacher asked John if he would like to make a picture of the air machine that he had constructed and put that on the chart showing that man in his development had reached the place where he was trying to get in touch with other planets. John liked the idea.

During this discussion the children started an argument about the stars and planets and about what life is like on other planets.

Philip said, "I wonder if Venus has gravity, because if it has I'll bet that professor will never get back to earth if he once gets there."

James said, "Gee, we ought to study astronomy."

The children went to Riverside Drive for their recreation period. John teased the other boys a little but his teasing was mostly in good fun.

After returning to the classroom the teacher asked the children what they enjoyed the most about the chapel service.

James said, "I never knew all that about electrons and things in our bodies."

"I didn't, either," said John. "That was all news to me. It certainly was interesting." Philip, Ruth and Grace also said they hadn't known these things before.

"Maybe God gathers up all those electrons and makes new people out of them," suggested Ruth.

"Oh, no, I don't think He could do that," said John. "They had their chances as people, and now all that energy goes into the earth, I think, and makes flowers and grass and things."

"Well, that's all right for the scientists to tell us about where our bodies go, but they don't tell us a thing about our souls," James protested.

Ruth said, "I couldn't imagine myself without my body. It's in your heart that you feel and if you didn't have any body there wouldn't be anything to be a soul."

"You don't know," said James.

The teacher asked the children why they thought it was that Jesus seems so real to us today when he died so many years ago.

John said, "Well, he was a wonderful man and his disciples told people about him and they told their children and they told theirs on and on down the ages until we know today."

The teacher asked the children if they didn't feel that one way in which a personality lives on in the world is in the influence the person continues to have on other people. The children agreed that this is true.

"But, of course, Jesus came to life again in a body. He was divine," said James.

"No, he couldn't have, James," objected Philip. "He was human as we are. His body must have gone as everybody's does, and it's just as Mrs. Sweet says about his personality living on through other people."

"I'm tired of having you always talk about science," said James. "It doesn't tell you one thing really, not where we came from nor where we are going nor anything. Until it can answer everything I'm not going to let it answer *my* questions. Why don't the scientists ever read their Bibles and learn something?"

The teacher asked James what he would have the scientists read in the Bible. "I'd have them read about Jesus," he said.

She asked James what it was that Jesus said that he liked to remember. "Well, he told us about God," James answered.

"He told us to do unto others what we would have them do to us," John replied.

"He said not to fight," said Grace.

The teacher said that all these things were in Jesus' message to the world; and that if it could be summed up in one word that word was "love," as the best way by which people may get along together.

"Yes, and I call that religion," said James, "but you don't get the scientists reading that."

The teacher asked James what he thought about a scientist who worked for years trying to discover the scarlet fever germ so that a way might be found to protect people from scarlet fever and the lives of thousands might be saved. She asked if such a scientist was showing his love for the people of the world and if the showing of such love was religion.

"No, I don't think that has one thing to do with religion," said James. "The scarlet fever germ hasn't one thing to do with religion."

The teacher asked James if he thought that a mine owner who tried to be fair and just to his workers and to treat them with respect was helping to work out Jesus' message of love.

"No, that isn't religion," James reiterated. "It's as different from religion as white-washing an old house is different from making a beautiful painting."

During this discussion the other children seemed to feel that religion is really life and that where fine things are going on, there religion is being worked out. James, however, clung to his point.

The last half hour was spent in a continuation of the story of Abraham's journey from Ur. Using Mrs. Bonser's book again, the teacher read the story of Noleth, the shepherd, who killed the lion to save the flocks.

The discussion of religion had taken so much time that there was little discussion of the Abraham story. The children seemed deeply interested in the story, however.

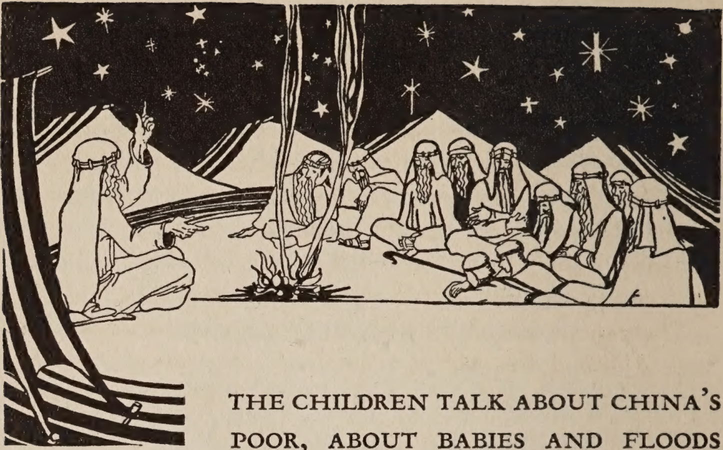
As she rose to go home Grace said, "My, I wish we could come back this afternoon!"

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

The discussion on the conflict between science and religion and on Jesus and immortality left the teacher puzzled and dissatisfied. She realized that there was a very real struggle in the minds and feelings of the children and she wished she might have been more appreciative of their different points of view. What are we besides mere bodies? Do we live in any way after death beside living in the memories of our friends? That we do has been the confident hope of Christians throughout the centuries. Without asserting dogmatically the traditional Christian position, perhaps she might have led the children to deeper appreciations could they have realized with what tremendous and significant questions they were dealing and how through the ages great men have differed in their solutions of these questions.

QUERIES

1. Do you agree with James that the effort to discover scarlet fever germs has nothing to do with religion? Is it your impression that James really believed what he said or did he feel he had to defend himself against something?
2. Was the teacher fair in summing up the teaching of Jesus in the word, "love"?
3. Was there a value in James' point about the inadequacy of science which the teacher evaded? Why did James feel so strongly that he must protect himself against science?



THE CHILDREN TALK ABOUT CHINA'S POOR, ABOUT BABIES AND FLOODS

EIGHT children were present today and all arrived on time.

Mr. Goulter, a missionary from China and father of two of the children attending the Union School of Religion, talked at the chapel service about what it means to be poor in China. He prefaced his remarks by showing the children that whereas the Chinese do some things differently from the way we do them, this does not necessarily mean that their way is not just as good as ours. He told a number of stories showing how very poor many people in China are. He told of parents who feel obliged to throw their new-born babies away because they do not have enough to feed the children they already have. He showed also how the West has been in some measure responsible for the poverty of millions of the Chinese people.

Following the chapel service, the children went to their hand-work and began labelling their chart. There was much interest in this undertaking. Philip and James, having remembered to bring their fountain pens, were the chief label makers. John also helped in doing the lettering. The others worked on various parts of the chart that still needed filling in.

During the play period the children were given the special privilege of playing in the gymnasium. John did some teasing of the other children and upon their return to the classroom, the teacher asked him about it.

"John kept hitting me with a ball," said Janet. "It's no fun to go to the gym if John is going to tease us."

The teacher asked John about this and he admitted that he had teased the others somewhat. She asked the children if they thought it was acting in a grown-up way to tease people.

"No, I don't think it is," John said.

The teacher said that the gym was used only by children who were old enough to play coöperatively, and that younger children who did not know how to play together happily had better remain outdoors where there was more room.

After this the children discussed the chapel talk. Robert said, "The thing I got out of that talk was that just because people are different from us is no sign that they are not just as good."

Jean said, "Oh, it was the terrible poverty of China that I remembered most and it made me feel so badly."

"That's what I remembered," said Janet, "and I think we should send them money and toys and things."

Robert said, "That isn't the way to help people. You might send them money and they would buy some foolish thing like a radio and then they would be just as bad off as they were before. Just giving money and toys is a stupid way to help. People have got to help themselves."

The teacher asked the others what they thought about the problem. She asked them if they thought that merely giving money is as good a way to help in the long run as some other way might be, such as educating the Chinese so that they may help themselves. She told the children that certain Americans had gone over to Asia principally to make money. They discovered oil in the ground, drilled wells, sold the oil and made themselves very rich when really the oil should belong to the Asiatics. She pointed out that one way of helping the Chinese might be to teach them how to develop their own resources and so to become richer themselves.

"Why did Mr. Goulter have to blame America for everything?" asked James.

"Well, America is the richest country in the world," said John, "and so the Americans are partly to blame if some other country hasn't enough."

Philip added, "Sure, America is the richest country in the world. My father told me so."

Robert said, "I think it would be better if the Chinese would kill those babies outright instead of leaving them to die somewhere if they get more babies than they can feed."

"I think so too," agreed James. "Just shoot them, and I should think they would shoot the babies and not older children because they are so little and have no common sense anyway."

John said, "Yes, sir, if that were this country they would kill them outright rather than let them suffer."

"I don't think they should be killed," objected Grace. "Someone might come along who could support them and would be glad to do so." Jean agreed with Grace.

The teacher pointed out to the children that if everything were worked out as it should be in the world, there would probably be enough so that no children who were born would need to starve to death. She tried to show them that China is rich in culture and much older in civilization than America and that while America is richer in material things she is perhaps not so rich in culture as China. What we want to do in the world is to understand and to share with each other, country with country, as well as person with person.

After this discussion the teacher read more of the story of Abraham, using Mrs. Bonser's book, *How the Early Hebrews Lived and Learned.* The story was of Abraham telling his people the story of Noah and the flood. When the teacher had finished reading it, she asked the children if they thought that the story of the flood was true.

"No, it's just a story," Robert answered.

"Sure, it is only a story," agreed Philip. "Probably there wasn't even a flood."

"Well, how could anyone think up such a good story if it wasn't true—I am sure I never could," said James.

The teacher said that the fact that there was a flood was probably historically true. Almost every ancient people has a story about a great flood. The Hebrew explanation of their flood as coming because God wanted to destroy the wicked people does not seem true to many of us. She asked the children what they thought caused the Japanese earthquake a few years ago.

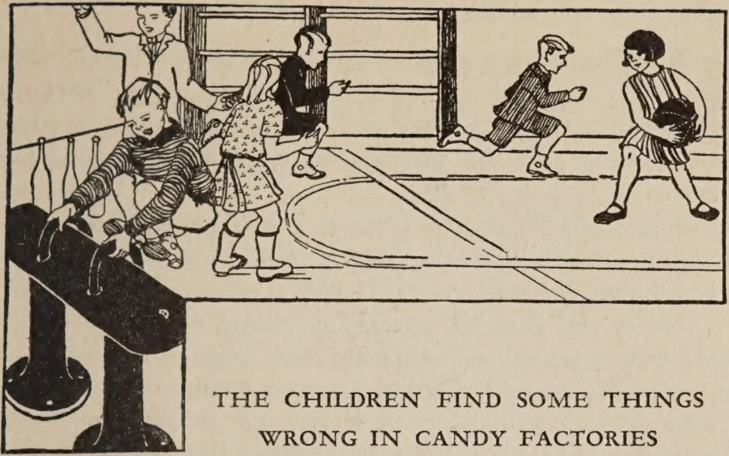
"Why, it was just the way the wind and the earth and ocean all came together," said Jean.

"You take the flood in New England," Robert began. "We really can say that God caused it because He made all those laws of science and He made man and man cut down all the trees and this makes floods, so God is to blame."

The teacher pointed out that in a way Robert was right, but she showed how different an interpretation this was from thinking that God brought a flood just because He was angry with people and thought they were wicked. It is a very different thing to hold God responsible for the laws which work out at times in disasters, from thinking that God sends floods and earthquakes in order to get even with people. The children seemed to understand the distinction.

QUERIES

1. Was the teacher telling the flood story in its historical setting when she introduced it as a story Abraham told? When and why was the Biblical flood story first told?
2. Does Robert's insistence that giving money is not the way to help people indicate that his generous impulses had been blunted by the previous teaching in the case of the miners? Should the teacher have appealed to the missionary motive at this point?
3. Should the teacher in the discussion of disasters have spoken of Jesus' attitude toward them as shown in his comment on the falling of the tower of Siloam? Would you have done so? How?
4. Would you so definitely have raised the question whether or not the story of the flood is true or would you have waited for the children to ask it? Why?



THE CHILDREN FIND SOME THINGS WRONG IN CANDY FACTORIES

Since today was a rainy Sunday only six children were present, John, James, Philip, Grace, Ruth and Janet.

The principal speaker at the chapel service was Miss Marion Hayes, a representative of the Consumers' League of New York. She described the conditions and activities in two candy factories in which she had worked. She asked the children to find out what was wrong with the pictures she described and to discuss these pictures in their classes later.

Following the chapel service, the children worked on their chart, labelling the pictures and adding last touches to it. None seemed satisfied with the appearance of New York City at the top. The teacher suggested that those who did not like it might set to work and improve it.

"All right," said Philip, "I will. I'll put a flag on that building and make windows in it."

Ruth said, "I'd like to fix up one of those buildings, too." So she went to work and added window boxes of red tulips alongside one building. The other children worked on labels.

Miss Hayes came in at 10.30 to give the children an opportunity to ask more questions about the candy factories. They gathered about her and she asked them what had been wrong with the picture she had drawn of the life in one of the candy factories.

John said, "Well, the workers didn't get paid enough."

"I know it," added James, "they even have to wear paper shoes."

"Why did that girl spend her money on movies when she was so poor?" asked Janet.

Miss Hayes said, "Well, don't you think that anyone who worked as hard as that girl did would need some recreation, such as going to the movies just once a week?"

"No, not when she is that poor," said Janet. "My mother works hard teaching every day, but she doesn't ever go to the movies." Miss Hayes suggested that perhaps Janet's mother did other things for her recreation.

"Another thing the matter with that factory was the way the girls used dirty old brushes to clean the candy, and the way their sweaters brushed across the candy all the time," was Philip's comment.

"What could the factory owners have done to make this situation better?" Miss Hayes asked.

"Make the rooms warmer and then the girls wouldn't have to wear sweaters," Grace suggested.

"Or they could wear long paper cuffs that would be perfectly clean," suggested John. "My mother wears them in her office sometimes."

Ruth said, "It was terrible that they didn't have towels."

Miss Hayes told more concerning the work of the Consumers' League, and gave each child a card giving information about the organization, and carrying a "White List" of candy factories where candy is made under conditions reaching a certain standard both of sanitation and of wages to employees.

Philip said, "Well, we hardly ever buy candy at our house, so I don't know whether this list will be very useful to us."

Miss Hayes said that everyone buys candy sometimes. As she related the hard luck tales the employers tell about high tariff on their imported goods, Philip asked, "What is tariff?"

The teacher explained that a tariff is much like the duty one pays when one comes into this country after buying things abroad.

Philip said, "Oh, I know about that because once when we came into this country one of the passengers put a false bottom in a box and stuffed things in the bottom with excelsior so the customs people couldn't find them. They didn't have to pay duty then."

The bell rang at this point and Miss Hayes had to leave.

Because of the rain the children voted to go to the gymnasium instead of going out of doors. Before they left the teacher reminded them that if they were to use the gym they must remember to act as grown-up as eight-year-olds and not to squabble and act like babies. As a result of this reminder they had a peaceful time and seemed to enjoy themselves hugely.

Upon returning to the classroom, the teacher said she wanted to speak of certain things that had happened at chapel that were worth mentioning. When Philip came in late, John immediately shared his hymn-book with him and showed him where they were singing. Ruth, too, had shared her book with a late comer. The teacher said that since they had to speak of unpleasant happenings so many times, she thought it was encouraging to mention thoughtful acts such as these. She also complimented the children on having played together so well in the gymnasium today.

After this the class went on with the story of Abraham. The account included the arrival at Haran and the death of old Terah, as well as the continuation of the journey to Canaan. The children looked at the map and followed intently all the details of the journey. When Terah's age was mentioned John said, "Who could ever live that long?"

The teacher said that probably he didn't live to be two hundred and fifty years old as we reckon time for ancient ways of reckoning time were different from ours.

Ruth said, "Well, my grandmother lived to be one hundred years old."

Having heard the story of Terah's death and Abraham's call to go on to another country, the children had a discussion about God's power to communicate messages to us.

Ruth said, "Why, Abraham probably had unhappy memories about Haran because his father died there and just wanted to leave and so it was as though God told him to go."

The teacher asked the other children what they thought of this.

"Yes, I think that was it," said John. "God can't really tell us what to do. Maybe He could, but He doesn't want to because He wants us to learn for ourselves."

The teacher asked the children if they didn't think God had helped us by building the world according to laws which can be understood and used.

"What do you mean by laws?" asked James.

The teacher, therefore, explained what was meant and showed what happens when these are violated. The children agreed that it makes the world a more comfortable place to live in when we know that it is run according to laws we can depend upon, and that it is worth while trying to understand more about these laws.

During the last fifteen minutes, the children discussed what they would like to do in case the school gave a pageant at the close of the school year.

Grace said, "I think it would be nice to act something about Abraham and his caravan."

"Oh, I do, too," said Janet enthusiastically. "One of us could be Abraham and we could make our costumes and everything."

The teacher asked them if they thought that acting such a scene would show what their year's work had been as well as anything else they might do.

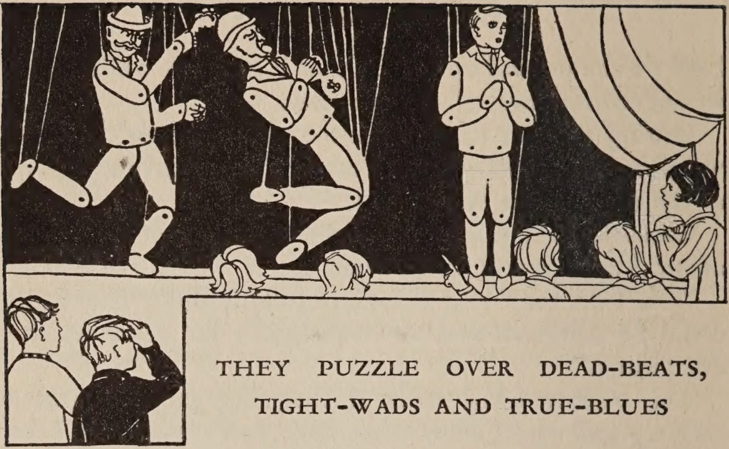
Ruth said, "Well, we have that chart showing all about the world, so it might be a good thing to bring in Abraham now."

Philip and James were fooling a little during this discussion. When called upon, they said, they, too, would like to work up something about Abraham, but neither seemed to be putting his mind to work on the proposal.

QUERIES

1. What do you think of the speaker's method of describing a real scene and asking the children later in their classrooms to talk about "What's wrong with the picture"? Would she have aroused more concern for changing conditions if she had expressed her own condemnation of the conditions and expected less discernment on the part of the children?

2. Do you think that John has lost his faith in God or that his faith is maturing?



THEY PUZZLE OVER DEAD-BEATS, TIGHT-WADS AND TRUE-BLUES

ONLY four children were present today, Ruth, John, Janet and Grace. One reason for some of the absences may have been the fact that this was the first day of day-light-saving time. Furthermore a good deal of illness was reported.

For the chapel service Mr. Raymond Wyland, another of the parents associated with the school, had been asked to speak concerning the work of the National Boy Scout Movement of which he was the executive secretary. Instead of telling of the achievements of the Boy Scouts, as had been expected, Mr. Wyland, being accustomed to large audiences of adults, used the opportunity to give the children a miniature sermon. He divided people into three categories—the Dead-beats, the Tight-wads and the True-blues, exhorting the children to be True-blues.

Following chapel the children worked on their chart until eleven o'clock. When they were once in the midst of shellacing the chart, they had to finish the job. There was a good deal of labelling to be done, too. They worked hard and well.

Upon their return from a happy play period, the children discussed the chapel talk. Ruth asked, "What did he call people red-beets for?"

"He didn't, he called them dead beats," said Janet.

"Well, what does that mean?" asked Ruth. "People aren't beets and they aren't dead."

John said, "I thought those names he called people were kind of funny, too."

The teacher asked the children what kind of people Mr. Wyland meant to describe by those terms.

Janet said, "Well, I want to be a True-blue, because that means being kind and sharing things and not being selfish."

"So do I," added Grace. "Dead-beats are just selfish people and so are Tight-wads."

John said, "Of course everybody wants to be a True-blue; nobody would decide to be one of those others."

The teacher suggested that possibly a more important thing to discuss would be how one can become a True-blue type of person.

"By being unselfish and sharing," Janet replied.

"You learn to be that kind of a person by experience," said Grace.

The teacher said that Grace had made a good point. We actually learn to be True-blues by having experiences when we are kind and share our belongings, because the way we learn is by doing. She pointed out the fact that merely having the idea that we wish to be True-blues does not in itself make us True-blues, but that doing kind things until the habit of doing kind things is built up is the way to attain the rank of a True-blue.

Following this discussion the class continued with the story of Abraham.[1] The material centered in Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac. The teacher pointed out to the children that Abraham was bound up with the customs of his times in feeling and believing that he should sacrifice his first-born to God.

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[1] See *How the Early Hebrews Lived and Learned*, by Edna M. Bonser.

"I don't think God ever wanted people to sacrifice anything," said Grace. "It's such a waste. They probably just thought He did."

"Well, I think it was just superstitious for them to think God wanted that," said John. "But I don't think it was any more superstitious than a lot of our religion today."

The teacher said that John's point was a challenge to us to look at all our practices to see just what are superstitious and what are really of value.

Grace said, "Probably hundreds of years from now people will study about us and say, 'What queer ideas they had about God and what funny things they did in church in those days.' "

The teacher considered that these were healthy reactions on the part of the children, giving evidence of a spirit of humility in the midst of all that we know today. For children to view the past with a spirit of understanding as well as with criticism and for them to feel their own inadequacies in the light of what future generations may discover, seemed an unusual attitude to achieve.

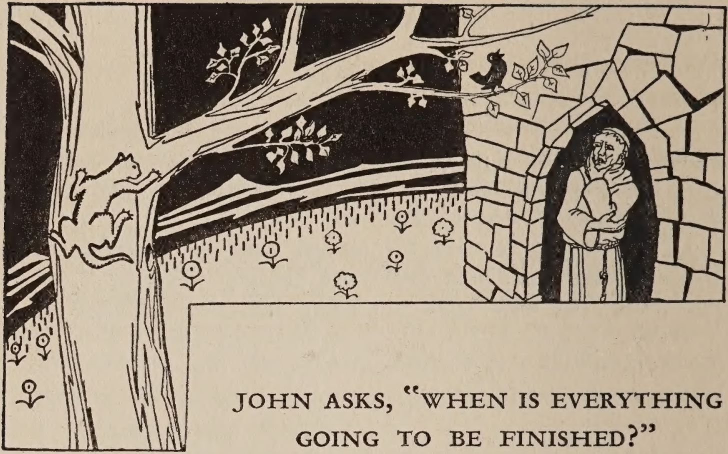
The teacher asked the children if they believed that God really would want people to make sacrifices of people or animals to Him. They all answered "no" without hesitation. She then asked if they could think of other ways that might be better for showing our gratitude for the world we live in. The bell rang and the class decided to continue the discussion the following week.

QUERIES

1. Suppose this children's sermon had not been followed up by a class discussion, what would Ruth have continued to think?

2. Do you wonder what modern superstitions John had in mind? Would you have asked him?

3. Do you agree with the teacher that the thoughts these children expressed about God were "healthy reactions," or do you think that their faith was being unsettled and harmed?



JOHN ASKS, "WHEN IS EVERYTHING GOING TO BE FINISHED?"

FIVE children, James, John, Jean, Ruth and Grace, were present today.

The challenge with which Mrs. Fahs opened the chapel service was the question, "What Is God Like?" She told of the discussion which the fourth-grade class had had over the hymn, "This Is Our Father's World" by Henry Van Dyke. "Is this our Father's world?" had been asked. "Is God like a father? Does He take care of us?"

"If He is a God who takes care of us," one boy had remarked, "He must be the rich man's God, for He doesn't seem to take care of the miners."

"What then is God like?" asked Mrs. Fahs. This was a question which men had asked ever since men lived who tried to think.

The group was asked to participate in responsive reading consisting of selections from the book of Job in which Job raised questions regarding God.

During the service Mrs. Fahs told several stories from the life of St. Francis of Assisi. In one story St. Francis was pictured as a rich young man challenged by the condition of a beggar whom he met on the steps at the entrance to his church. In pity St. Francis gave the beggar his own suit of clothes and donned the beggar's garb in order to learn for himself how it felt to be a beggar. St. Francis was a man who cared so deeply for all who were in want or were suffering that he became poor in order that he might share everything he had with those who were of necessity poor. It was natural, therefore, that St. Francis imagined God as being one who cared for all who were helpless or in need.

Mrs. Fahs also told stories showing St. Francis' love for birds, of his feeding them, talking to them, preaching to them; and of his belief that God took care even of the birds. These stories were all illustrations showing how St. Francis thought of God.

Mrs. Fahs wondered if any questions about God ever troubled St. Francis. She asked what St. Francis must have thought had he ever seen a cat climb a tree, catch a bird unawares and eat it up. In that case, which of the two animals concerned did God care for? Did He take care of either one?

Even though God may not take care of either birds or cats, even though he does not protect them from being killed, is He in any way interested in birds and cats? Even though God may not protect the miners from going hungry and from having to work fourteen hours a day in the dark mines, is God interested in the miners? Is there perhaps something that God cares for more than to keep birds and cats from dying or to keep miners and other unfortunate people from suffering? What is it for which God seems to care most?

These are very puzzling questions. Perhaps God cares more for cats and birds and people to be free to work out their own ways of living and to learn for themselves than he does to make life easy for any of us. At least, the question which the fourth grade class raised is a very important question. If God is like a Father, what sort of a Father is He? As we learn more and more about the universe in which we are living, we may be better able to answer these questions. What we ourselves are going to be caring about and what we are going to count on as most worth while depends very much on what we think God most cares about.

Following the chapel service, the children spent the usual hand-work period in a discussion of what the year's work had meant to them. The teacher explained to them that at the chapel service on May 20, the closing Sunday of the year, each class was to share with the rest of the school some story of their work during the year. First of all she asked them to appoint their spokesman for the occasion.

Grace said, "I think Jean would be a good one." "So do I," said Ruth, and the others agreed.

"What shall I say?" asked Jean. The teacher replied, "That will be for the group to decide. You might all think over the year's work for a few minutes and try to see what the big things are that we have discovered."

Jean said, "Well, first of all we got interested in nature study, telling about our summer vacations. And then we spent a long time on frogs."

"That is right, and as we studied nature what were we especially interested in?" asked the teacher.

John said, "We were especially interested in seeing the different ways that animals have of protecting themselves."

The teacher asked if they remembered what question was raised very early during the study. "I asked if there was any God," said John.

The teacher asked the children what they thought about John's question after all they had studied during the year, and in view of all that Mrs. Fahs had said in chapel that morning.

Jean said, "Well, I think that there surely is a God, after all we've studied. We went right back to the beginning just as our chart shows, and saw how the world began by flying off the sun. How could that ever have happened if there hadn't been something behind the world? And that must be God."

The teacher asked what the other children thought and suggested that they especially remember all their study of birds and sea life.

John said, "Well, I think that there is a God, too."

James and Ruth and Grace felt the same way though James said, "But who made God, that's what I want to know?"

The teacher said, "God is the term that we use for the Ultimate Reality back of the universe." She asked the children what kind of a God they thought He was and how He worked in the world. "For instance," she said, "how did you feel this morning when Mrs. Fahs described a beautiful bird singing in a tree and then told how a cat climbed the tree and killed the bird? What do you children think about it?"

John said, "Well, I think God probably likes the bird best, because the bird wasn't going to kill anybody. But if the cat had killed the bird there would be one less thing in the world."

James said, "Well, I think God loved them just alike, because He gave the bird the power to fly, and it was just his hard luck if he didn't fly and so not get caught."

The teacher said that James had made a good point, and that in the gradual growth process in the world all living things developed capacities by which they could get along. She emphasized the fact that this growth and the freedom which each person has are the big things which make us feel that God is back of it all. She said that in the evolutionary process the cat had developed a capacity to climb trees in order to protect himself from other animals, while the birds had developed the ability to fly; and that then each one was free within his field to do as he wished. It is because of this freedom that it is possible for a cat to catch and kill a bird. She asked the children to think more carefully about the year's work and see if this idea of growth and freedom had not been present in everything.

John said, "It certainly seems to be that way everywhere. Animals have changed until now there is man, with intelligence. And people's ideas of God have changed, too. We studied about what the early caveman believed and then Abraham's ideas, and ours have changed from those. What I would like to know is, when is everything going to be finished?"

"It never will be finished," said Grace.

"Well, it might, if the world just came to an end by some terrible thing happening," said James.

Jean said, "Don't you remember that talk we had over at Horace Mann School where somebody said, 'What if the sun should draw the earth back to itself some day?' "

"Well, I don't mean finished in that way," said John. "I don't mean when it is all done for."

The teacher asked if in view of all they had studied they thought a time would come when the earth would be finished as John meant, a time when growth would no longer take place.

They all said that they felt this would never happen; that growth is the one thing we can always be sure of. The teacher told the children that it is very important to realize how much can be done so long as this power to grow and the chance to be free is for all of us.

James said, "I know it, we can either grow good habits or bad habits. It depends on the kind of fathers and mothers we have and the kind of things that we do."

The teacher emphasized the fact again that by giving us this degree of freedom, God has put it up to us whether our growth shall be for good or for bad. At this point the teacher asked Jean if she would now like to stand up by the chart and tell these things as she might do to all the school on the closing Sunday.

Jean, therefore, told her audience of the things that the class had discovered in nature, and then said, "I wish that somebody else would tell the part about what we think of God. It is so much for me to have to remember."

Ruth said, "Why can't John do that?" The others agreed to this.

The teacher asked John if he would try during the week to think through what he would say, in view of all that had been discussed that morning. She promised that all would help him next Sunday in the discussion period.

Following this discussion, the children went for their recreation period to the gymnasium, where they played happily. Just when it was time to go, James came up to the teacher and said, "I'm sorry, I broke one of the handles on a pulley."

The teacher went with him to look at the apparatus, told him that he had done the right thing to tell her about it, and said that they would wait to discuss it until they had returned to the classroom.

John came up and said, "Can't I stay in the gym longer with Mr. Osborn's boys?"

The teacher answered, "Have you thought what you will miss in the class if you should stay here?"

He said, "Yes, I'd miss the Bible story, but I have been reading all those at home, so you see I know it anyway."

The teacher said, "We shall miss you in the discussion of it, John. But you may decide."

"All right, I'll come back as soon as these boys do," decided John.

When the others of the group reached the classroom, James' problem of the broken pulley was brought up. The teacher asked what they thought they should do about it.

James said, "I think it ought to be reported."

Grace said, "I think we all ought to offer to help James pay for it."

Jean said, "I don't, because he broke it, and it is his affair."

"I think we might help a little, but I think James ought to do the most," was Ruth's opinion.

The teacher asked if they felt that the pulley should be paid for. They all agreed to this. She then asked them which suggestion they thought to be best; that because they had been over in the gymnasium as a group, the group should pay and take it out of their collection, or that because James had done it he should be responsible, or that they should divide the cost? After some discussion they decided to go half and half. John joined the group during this discussion and felt that it would be best for the group to help James pay for the damage done.

The story today was about Sarah's death and of Abraham's sending his servant to find a wife for Isaac. Jean said, "Our fathers don't choose our wives today." The teacher pointed out how customs also grow and change, just as does everything else in the world. The story was enriched in value by several newspaper pictures of wandering tribes which Mrs. Fahs had sent the class.

Following this story the children had a discussion on what to do with their collection for the year. The teacher reported that they had $9.80.

Grace said, "I think we might give it to the poor."

"What poor?" asked the teacher.

"Well, we studied about the poor miners," said Jean.

"I know it, and I think it would be good to give the money for meal tickets for the poor miners," said John. "If we just give them the money right out they might buy a radio or something foolish."

"Well, what if they do?" asked James. "Wouldn't you like to spend the money the way you wanted to? If you were hungry enough you would certainly buy food."

"Why couldn't we just give to poor beggars?" said Ruth.

"Sometimes it's hard to know from looks who are really poor," said the teacher; "so perhaps it would be better to give our money through some organization which has investigated and knows who the poor and needy are. There is the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor that we heard about at Christmas time."

John said, "I know it. My mother says that a woman came up to her one day crying and mother gave the woman fifty cents. The woman said she had fallen in a man-hole. A few minutes afterward my mother saw the woman take a big roll of bills out of her stocking."

The children seemed very much undecided as to what to do, whereupon the teacher impressed upon them the need for making decisions in this world and told them the bell was about to ring.

Grace said, "Well, why couldn't we give part to the miners and part to the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor?"

The teacher asked the children what they thought of it, and they voted unanimously to divide their money in this way.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

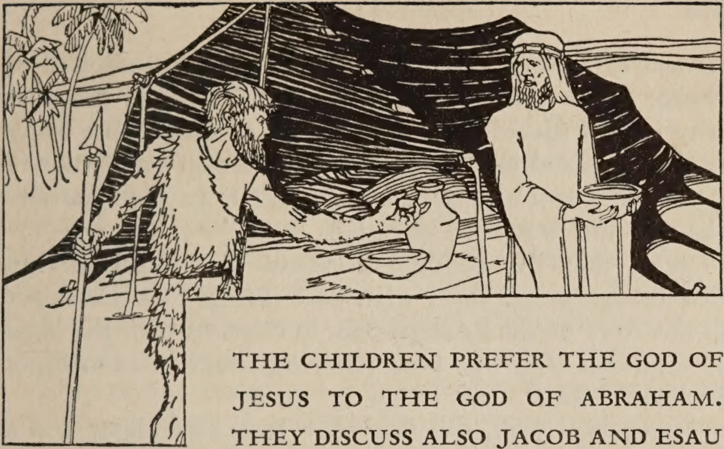
The teacher, remembering John's reaction to coercion, was careful to give him frequent opportunities for free choice. His special privilege today in remaining in the gymnasium longer than the rest of the children was granted for this reason. Fortunately the rest of the children did not claim the same privilege.

QUERIES

1. Should so difficult a question as that raised in the chapel service be presented to children?

2. Would this chapel service have been more worshipful and inspiring had the leader told the stories of St. Francis showing his tender love for the poor and for animals, and his belief in God's care without raising any question about his theology? Or did the questions, though disturbing, lead some of the children on to a deeper worship experience? If so, was it or was it not worth doing?

3. Are the children's expressed conclusions about God in accord with the teachings of Jesus? Should the quoting of the teachings of Jesus on the subject have answered the question finally for them?



THE CHILDREN PREFER THE GOD OF JESUS TO THE GOD OF ABRAHAM. THEY DISCUSS ALSO JACOB AND ESAU

FIVE children, John, Jean, Philip, Grace and Janet, were present today. Robert was still quite ill and a number of the other children had already gone away to the country.

Mrs. Fahs led the chapel service and her general theme was that of a growing faith. She told the story of an imaginary figure, whom she called Jacob, who lived in the time of Jesus and who rebelled against the authority of the synagogues and the laws they imposed. She followed him as he left home in his quest for freedom until one day he came upon Jesus telling the story of the Prodigal Son. This gave him a new idea of a father who loved his children regardless of their shortcomings,—a God who thought it better to give his children freedom and the chance to make their own choices rather than a God who would control by rule all the everyday details of life.

Following chapel the children discussed again what they were going to say regarding their chart at the chapel service the next Sunday. They reviewed the things they had discussed the previous week and then Jean and John each told what they would say in their talks next Sunday. They seemed to hesitate a bit and were rather self-conscious in trying to get their ideas expressed. The teacher felt that they needed special coaching in order to speak more easily so she suggested that they meet with her on Friday afternoon for a special practice. The others in the class also thought this would be desirable.

After this, the children discussed the chapel service. The teacher asked them what new idea of God came out in this story of the Prodigal Son, in contrast with the ideas of God that they had been studying about in connection with Abraham.

Jean said, "Well, this God that Jesus told about was a loving God and He forgave people. But Abraham's people were a little afraid of God. They thought God was sterner and harsher."

The teacher asked the children if they thought it was right for the Jacob of the chapel story to break away from his home and synagogue in the way he did.

Grace said, "Yes, I think it was right, because it's always better for people to live their own lives."

Jean said, "So do I. No one should have to obey laws like that and never have a chance to do what they think is right themselves. That's an awful way to be." The others all agreed to this.

Mrs. Fahs had sent up to the classroom an illustrated book giving the story of the Prodigal Son, and as the children turned the pages, looking at the pictures, Janet said, "Oh, there's the bad son."

Grace said,"He wasn't bad. He was just jealous."

The teacher told the children a little more about Jesus and the contribution He made toward changing men's ideas of God. She asked the children how many of them would be in the Union School of Religion the next year and asked them if they would like to go on with this study of Jesus' ideas about life and about God. They seemed much interested in this and the teacher told them to remember this suggestion when next year came and they were deciding what to study.

After this discussion the children went over to the gymnasium and after a few minutes of playing Janet came up to the teacher and reported John's teasing. When the teacher asked John about it, he said, "Yes, I was teasing them. It was fun."

The teacher asked him if he couldn't have his fun in a more grown-up way and in a way which did not interfere with others' pleasure. John thought that he could.

A few minutes later one of the other children came again and reported more of John's teasing. Then the teacher called all the children about her and discussed the matter with them, suggesting that if John could not act like an eight-year-old boy, he might come and sit with her. Since John said, "I'd rather act like eight," the children then went back to play.

After another five minutes Philip came up to the teacher and said, "John hit me with a ball." The teacher, thinking it seemed strange that John's behavior needed to be reported so soon again, asked Philip if he had invited the trouble in any way.

Philip admitted, "Well, maybe I did invite it a little." With that he joined the others. When the class returned to their room they brought John's behavior up for discussion. The teacher asked the children if they thought John had been to blame for every occasion when there had been trouble.

Jean said, "No, I don't think he was. After you spoke to him once he was lots better."

Grace said, "I heard Janet ask him to chase her the next time."

Janet said, "I did not."

The teacher asked that the children think whether or not they hadn't had a share in the trouble as well as John. She pointed out the fact that John did start the teasing, but that he had admitted it and had tried to change and that then the others may have led him on in order to have the fun of telling on him. They all agreed there was truth in this.

After this discussion the class continued the story of Hebrew life. Esau's selling his birth-right and thus losing his right to the blessing from Isaac was the main episode in the narrative told.

After the story Jean said, "Well, I don't think Jacob was to blame for being the way he was because his mother spoiled him from the time he was born, so how could he be any other way? And she was unkind to like him better than she did Esau."

John said, "I know it. It wasn't Esau's fault that he was red and hairy. She shouldn't have judged him just because he wasn't attractive like Jacob was. I think she was more to blame than Jacob."

The teacher asked the children if they thought Esau had done right to sell his birth-right for a good meal when he came home from hunting.

Jean said, "No, that was stupid of him, not to think ahead. But I think Jacob should have shared with him for nothing."

Philip said, "I know it. Esau ought not to have just thought of eating when he came in. His birth-right was an awfully big thing to give just for a bowl of pottage."

Jean said, "Well, if they were twins, maybe they were just the same age and not one older than the other."

The teacher explained that in birth it wouldn't be possible for two children to be born exactly at the same time.

Jean said, "Well, why didn't they have the same custom that Abraham had and sacrifice their first born? Then Jacob would have gotten the birth-right, because Esau would have been the one to be sacrificed." This unexpected question the teacher answered as best she could at the time, saying that this custom of sacrificing the first born was not practiced by every family and that Isaac and Rebecca had perhaps gone beyond Abraham in their thinking about human sacrifice.

Grace said, "Well, I think it was mostly Rebecca's fault for bringing the children up the way she did. I feel the sorriest for Esau and I think Jacob was the bad one; only it wasn't his fault he was bad, so we can't blame him."

The bell rang in the midst of this discussion.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

A teacher needs to use common sense in handling conduct situations. This was illustrated today when the children obviously led John on in order to attract the teacher's attention.

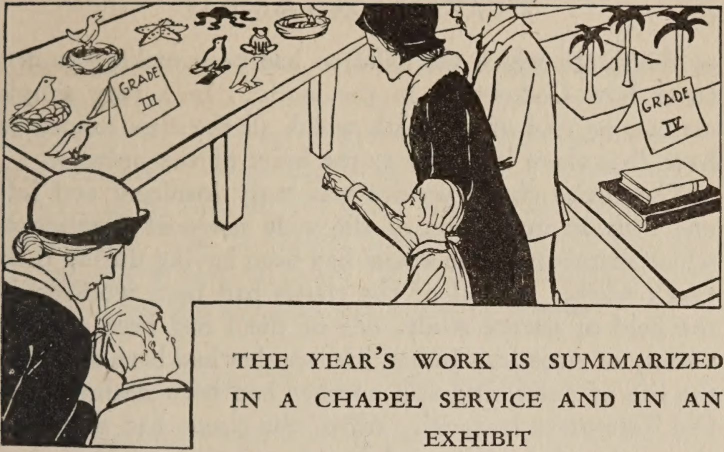
QUERIES

1. Was the teacher right in putting the responsibility of John's conduct on the group? When is a conduct problem merely a personal one to be handled privately and when should the group share in a discussion and a decision regarding it?

2. Do you see a way by which these children might have harmonized the point of view of Jesus regarding God, with the

conceptions of God they had already expressed in connection with their nature study? If so, how would you have handled the discussion?

3. What do the children's remarks about Jacob and Esau and their mother reveal concerning their own attitudes toward life? Which remarks show a wholesome understanding? Which indicate a narrow and unsocial point of view? How do you feel about their hesitancy in placing blame?



THE YEAR'S WORK IS SUMMARIZED IN A CHAPEL SERVICE AND IN AN EXHIBIT

As this was the closing Sunday of the year there was more or less informality about the morning's program. Jean and John arrived early in order to go over their reports with the teacher before the chapel service in which they were to take part. As the other children drifted in they seemed full of enthusiasm about the year's work and about all that they had accomplished. Many of the parents had come with them to attend the chapel service and to see the exhibit of hand-work on which this and other classes had been working throughout the year.

The final chapel service was an event of marked significance because of the fact that a representative from each class in the school shared in the service by telling something of the year's work done by his class. John and Jean had been chosen as representatives from the third-grade group. When called upon, Jean told briefly of the nature-study work which the class had been interested in during the year, laying special emphasis on the provisions which they found in nature for all living things to maintain and protect themselves. John told in an informal way of the search which the children had been making to discover how God works in the world. In a very simple manner he told of the faith which all the class seemed to have that there is a God at the heart of the universe.

The entire chapel service was truly inspiring and left one with an impression of the wide range of experiences which members of the school had been having during their year's work. Several of the classes had been working in the field of nature study, one of them had been making a study of American Indian life, another had been studying the life of Jesus, and still another had been dealing with Old Testament material. All of the classes had shared in the study of poverty and human relations as these had been opened up to them through the chapel services. A number of the children mentioned this fact as they gave résumés of their year's work.

Following the chapel service the children proceeded to the exhibit room on the main floor of the Seminary building where they were to act as interpreters for the visitors who wished to ask questions about the exhibit. All the classes under the direction of Miss Smedley had arranged exhibits of their work.

The third-grade exhibit consisted of the chart showing the development of life on earth from the time of the emergence of the amoeba up to present-day civilization. In addition, the children had put on display the animals and birds which they had modelled in clay and had painted. After the chapel service a number of the parents followed the children to the exhibit room, and took the greatest interest in seeing what the class had achieved. The children were delighted to hear the comments of visitors and to see the exhibits of other classes. As a result, they lingered downstairs most of the morning.

At about eleven-thirty, the teacher suggested that the children return to the classroom for a brief visit together before the class broke up. There was a delightful period of good fellowship. The teacher felt that any special effort on her part to sum up the year's study would have been superfluous. The children's thinking and achievements had become a part of them. She said good-bye, feeling confident that the children could still be trusted.

COMMENTS FOR THE READER

It was customary each May for the Union School of Religion to set up an exhibit of its work. This was usually opened to parents and friends of the school during certain hours each day for about a week or more at the close of each year. In this exhibit were found the annual reports of teachers and officers, certain special records of services of worship and samples of teachers' weekly diary records. The exhibit also contained charts presenting in poster and photographic form the various phases of the school's activities.

In addition to these features, each class in the school worked out its own special exhibit. These usually contained samples of the children's original drawings, paintings, stories, poems, books, posters and clay or pasteboard models made during the year. It was the policy of the school not to encourage the children's making things just for the exhibit; however, the school encouraged the children to express their thoughts in tangible form, and the creations worthy to be shared were preserved when possible for the annual exhibit.

QUERIES

1. What would you think of a Children's Day service consisting of a series of talks given by various representatives of the classes in the school telling of their work through the year?

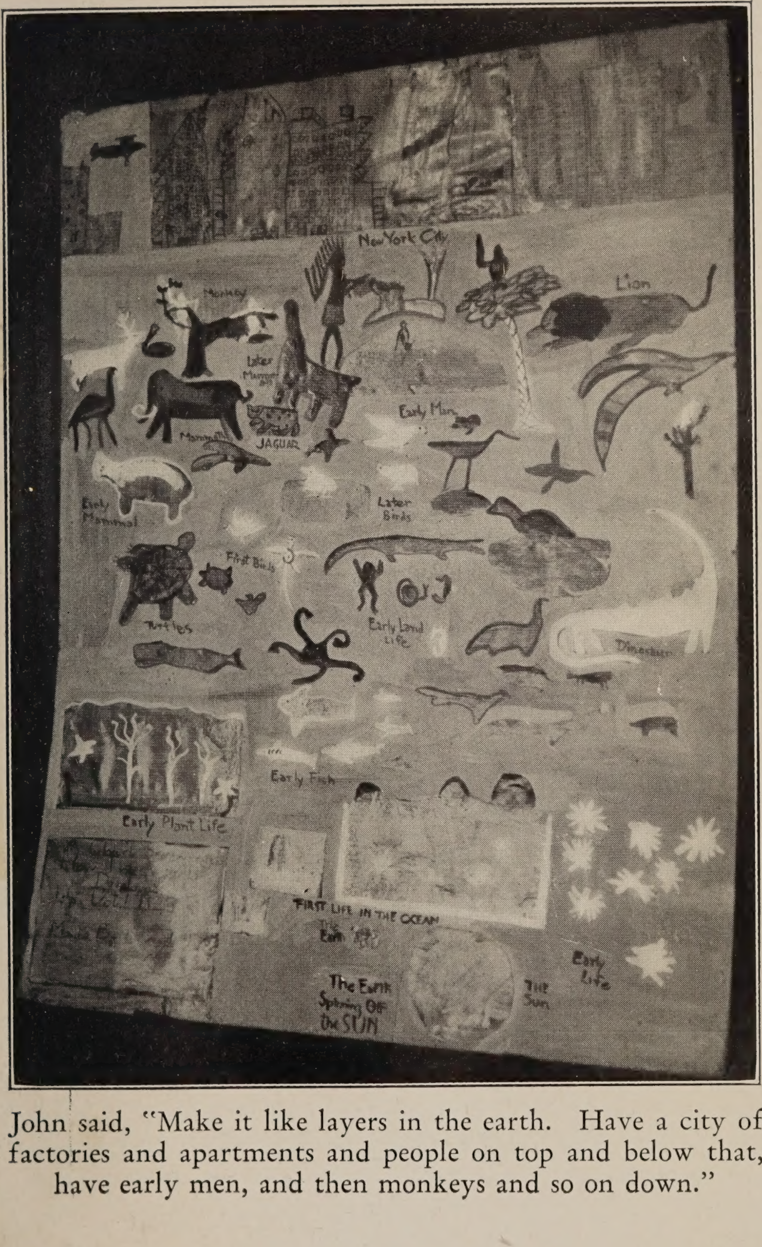
What did such a service do for the children of the Union School of Religion? For their parents?

2. Would an annual exhibit be a worth-while undertaking for other Sunday schools? What was the value of the exhibit here described to the children of this class? To the parents? To the school? How might an annual exhibit become an undesirable influence?

3. What was it that became a part of the children as a result of the year's work? Was the teacher unduly optimistic? What are the evidences of changing attitudes and appreciations as found in these diary records?

PART II

AN INTERPRETATION


New York City
Monkey
Lion
Later Mammals
Early Man
Mammoth
JAGUAR
Early Mammal
Later Birds
First Birds
Turtles
Early Land Life
Dinosaurs
Early Fish
Early Plant Life
FIRST LIFE IN THE OCEAN
The Earth
Early Life
The Earth Spining OFF the SUN
THE Sun

John said, "Make it like layers in the earth. Have a city of factories and apartments and people on top and below that, have early men, and then monkeys and so on down."

Chapter I

THE POINT OF VIEW

At the close of the story hour one Sunday morning, Robert begged the teacher to continue telling him more about early life. "I like this so much better than school," he said. "I like it, too," said Jean, "only we don't learn as much here as we do at school." Robert went on to say that the reason he liked the Sunday school better was that the teacher put everything together in such a different way.

Through this brief discussion the children showed that they had quite unwittingly discovered the very element that, from the point of view of this teacher, makes religious education unique; namely, the endeavor to see life in its totality, in terms of relationships rather than in terms of isolated facts, such as those of history or of geography. The child who said she didn't learn as much here as at school was right in the sense that she probably did not learn as much factual knowledge, but Robert put his finger on the important element, which is the learning to see life in its "togetherness," with all the myriad relationships of life fitting together to make a harmony. This, in a nutshell, is the philosophy of religious education which lies back of these diary records.

Leaders employing democratic methods are sometimes accused of meeting their groups with minds void of definite purposes. The writer of the diary reproduced in this book had ends in view. Religion as she conceived it is the sum total of one's attitudes and relationships toward life, including one's relationship to God, to the universe, to others, and to one's self,—in a word, one's fundamental relationship to reality. With this basic philosophy, she regarded any subject of interest to the class and which also had a bearing on these major relationships of life, as legitimate material for religious education. Her primary concern became not so much to introduce facts, Biblical or otherwise, to the children, as to help them to learn ways of working out better relationships in life through thought and action.

Through the achieving of these worthier and wider relationships life becomes richer. It takes on greater meaning and significance. Through identifying our interests with those of an ever-widening circle we ourselves expand. Through enlarging our own horizons our personalities grow. Jesus must have had a similar conception of religious growth in mind when he said, "I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10.)

As a corollary of this general philosophy of religion, the teacher believes that such religious growth must have its roots in the child himself. The Kingdom of God is essentially within. It was the teacher's aim, therefore, to help the children to feel all the while that if they were to achieve a religion, the search must be essentially their own concern. She had respect for the children's viewpoints and desired to give them a share in the ordering of their program. Their interests and their needs were continually given chances for expression and these were, in fact, the main considerations in working out the curriculum. Subject matter was made secondary in importance to the children's interests.

We have been slow to relinquish authority, especially in religion, fearing that to do so might mean the decline of moral standards or an abandonment of the essentials of the Christian faith. These diary records, however, contain evidence pointing toward the conclusion that individual religious growth takes place more rapidly and wholesomely through the development of freedom than through methods of authority. Furthermore, unless children are helped to develop moral resourcefulness and independence in their early years, what assurance can we have that they will be able to initiate and plan their own affairs and be able to make sound moral judgments when they have reached maturity?

Again, if moral and religious education is to be a personal growing and searching process it must be carried on in an attitude of open-mindedness. In order to develop this attitude most effectively, the teacher encouraged a scientific approach to all subjects as a method insuring the greatest integrity of thinking, and most likely to eliminate bias and prejudice. Many times the questions raised were turned back to the children for consideration and solution. The conception of life as a growing process was continually kept before them, emphasis being laid upon the fact that man must adjust to a changing world in the field of religion as well as in other realms.

The children were helped to be tolerant of varying points of view. The spirit with which they were encouraged to meet life was one of inquiry. They were helped to discover why various things have happened as they did and why certain viewpoints have been held, rather than to be critical of these viewpoints according to any prejudiced standards which they might have held. This effort to help the children to develop an open-minded attitude toward life and to encourage them to achieve independence in conducting their affairs was a deliberate emphasis on the part of the teacher.

The story of the time when the children were discussing Abraham and his ideas of God is an illustration of this point of view. The class had just listened to the story of how Abraham's father had died at Haran, and of how Abraham had had a vision from God telling him to go on to another country. The children were discussing God's power to communicate messages directly to men. One child said, "Why, Abraham probably had unhappy memories about Haran because his father died there and Abraham just wanted to leave and so he thought God told him to go." The teacher asked the other children what they thought of this. One of them said, "Yes, I think that was it. God can't really tell us what to do. Maybe He could but He doesn't want to because He wants us to learn for ourselves." This illustrates the general attitude which the children were developing. Instead of taking Abraham's ideas of God as something sacred, the children were viewing them with open minds, trying to discern why Abraham felt the way he did.

The children had many opportunities during the year to develop the same open-minded attitude toward social questions. The question of poverty was discussed in a series of chapel talks following which the children had many occasions to think over the various issues involved. On one occasion a miner had described to the children the coal strike in Pennsylvania, giving them a picture of the hardships which the miners have to endure because of what he considered to be selfishness and injustice on the part of the mine owners. The following Sunday the case of a typical mine owner was presented to the children and they were helped to weigh the miners' problems with the facts from both sides in mind.

In conduct situations, the children were helped to be fair to the situations in which they found themselves involved. The teacher encouraged a scientific approach through the asking of such questions as the following: "What is the difficulty?" "What are the things that happened because of this difficulty?" "Do we know everything that we need to know about this situation?" "Would anybody be hurt if we do this?" "Would another way out be more helpful?" If the children learn to use such methods as these in handling their conduct problems instead of following a teacher who sets up some arbitrary standard for conduct, they will develop a wholesome technique for meeting life's situations for themselves.

One Sunday morning on their return from the recreation period, the children were playing rather strenuously in their classroom. Some of the chairs were thrown down, a table covered with papers belonging to one of the professors was almost knocked over. Instead of telling the children that "rough-housing" was bad, and that, therefore, they should stop, the teacher asked some of them to pause a moment and think of all the things that might happen if they continued. As they thought through the possibility of the professor's desk being overturned with all his papers in confusion the situation took on importance, and the children willingly discontinued their play.

Sometimes in this search for better relationships, the teacher encouraged the children to withhold definite conclusions and decisions. In considering great questions such as the problem of poverty in China or in Russia, or the nature of God, she led the children to keep on the alert for more data. With immediate problems where some action was demanded, she encouraged the children to think the matter through to a definite conclusion. At these times it was important to decide upon a "best," to form an opinion as to which course of action or which attitude was nearer "right," after weighing carefully the various factors in the situation. This judgment might be open to revision on a future occasion, but for the particular situation with which the children were dealing it seemed the best at the time. Even such a desirable trait as open-mindedness must not lead to indecision in situations where action is both called for and is less to be feared than no action at all.

In addition to this aim to encourage open-mindedness and a scientific search, the teacher desired to see the children develop an appreciation for the wonder and beauty of the universe. There were occasions when they found themselves in silent awe over the wonders they were discovering in nature, moments when reality seemed to transcend analysis. These were some of the richest experiences of the year. At times these experiences mounted to the level of worship.

One such occasion occurred when the teacher had been telling the children about the early Hebrew shepherds travelling from place to place to find better pastures for their flocks. She told them how when the shepherds were resting in the evening some of them used to sing psalms about the lovely world about them. She helped the children to visualize a group of tired shepherds out in the open looking up at the hills and getting strength and comfort from them. She read them part of the 121st Psalm, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence shall my help come? My help cometh from Jehovah, who made heaven and earth." One of the children said he knew just how the shepherds must have felt, and added that he often sat down and wrote a poem when he felt that way. At such times the children seemed to transcend time and space and to be joined in spirit with men of all ages through the beauty and wonder of life. Such experiences left the group with the realization that reality can best be grasped through a combination of the appreciative and scientific approaches and that where either is neglected reality is likely to become distorted. In fact, it is one of the regrets of the teacher that the appreciative approach to life was not developed to a greater extent during the year.

Finally, the teacher made a point of trying to link together the different phases of the morning's program so that the children would be conscious of a certain unity. During the course of the year it was interesting to discover how naturally the various parts did link together, the study of nature working in constructively to help the children in their search to understand how God works in the world. This was especially gratifying to the teacher since the idea that living should become one unified purposeful whole is a major element in her philosophy.

In conclusion, the point of view of the teacher might be summed up in the words: Trust the child. Honor his integrity as an individual. In all his relationships expect him to grow and as he grows recognize the process as religious. Make it necessary for him to be resourceful and independent. Count on his doing his own exploring. Teach him how to be open-minded and yet not to be as "a reed shaken by the wind." Finally, have fellowship with him in experiences of appreciation of the wonder and beauty and sacredness of life.

Chapter II

THE CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES IN WORSHIP

SINCE the services of worship which this group of children attended each Sunday morning were so frequently discussed by the class, and since the services seem to have been of such continuing interest to the children, a few comments are appropriate regarding the nature of these services and the philosophy back of them.

Unlike most Sunday school "opening exercises," these services lasted long enough to make possible an impressive experience for the children. During the first semester, when this class met with the kindergarten, and the first and second grades for worship, the services lasted about one half hour. During the second semester, when this class met with the children of the junior and intermediate departments, the services were about forty-five minutes in length.

Usually in both cases, these services for the children were held in the Union Theological Seminary chapel. The stately Gothic pillars, the soft lights from the stained-glass windows and the dignity and beauty of the decorations and appointments of the room lent their suggestions of that unspeakable and mysterious something which we are prone to forget when in the midst of unworthy or barren surroundings.

A children's choir, gowned in simple black robes, led the school in processional and recessional. Dr. Melville Charlton, the organist, from time to time skillfully encouraged the spirit of meditation through the playing on the great organ of musical selections especially fitted to the purposes of the services. Dignity and order characterized these occasions, but with a minimum of ritual. The usual quiet seriousness of the children seemed natural, based on the intrinsic worth of the challenge which the service made to them, rather than on a feigned reverence achieved through a sense of fear or by means of solemn exhortation. From the time when Dr. George A. Coe and Dr. Hugh Hartshorne were responsible for the school, and during the leadership of Dr. Goodwin Watson and Mr. Ralph Bridgman, these services stood in a distinctive way for the Union School of Religion. Frequently parents and children expressed the feeling that these chapel services were the best part of the school's program,—at least the services were a significant factor that was always to be reckoned with.

The initiative for planning the services of worship usually came from a department supervisor or from the principal of the school, both of whom considered it as an essential qualification for such leadership to keep in close and constant touch with the current happenings in the different classes represented. The teachers' written weekly reports, the weekly personal interviews between the principal or department supervisor and each teacher, and the weekly meetings of the entire teaching staff, together made possible a continuing interchange of experience. The services of worship were planned from week to week or from month to month in the light of awakening interests and of emerging needs. The discussions and the activities of the various classes fed into these services and the services of worship in turn stimulated further discussions and enriched and widened the children's experience.

Questionings about God, for example, arising in class discussions were made the central theme of several services of worship. Once in the primary group, a Brazilian fable was told of an ant which wandered far and wide over the earth and up into the sky in search of an answer to the one great question that was troubling him, and discovered at the last that all things led back to God. Later in the year in the program of worship for the older group, two chapel services were given over to thought on this problem of what God is like and what it is for which He seems to care the most. St. Francis' way of thinking of God's care of birds as well as of men was presented through a story. At another service, Jesus' thought of God was portrayed through the telling of the story of the Prodigal Son. The story teller imagined a young Jew, bound from childhood by the habit of obedience to minute laws, listening to the story from the lips of this radical Rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth. The young legalist must have been amazed to contemplate God as being like a father who would give his son the freedom to choose for himself at so great a risk of failure. These stories were told on successive Sundays, to kindle the children's interest in exploring further for themselves the problem of God and the meaning of life. What are the things which seem to be of the greatest importance to God? The leaders were not concerned to have the children come into agreement with a predetermined point of view but rather to create the conditions most stimulating to genuine thoughtfulness and creative development on the part of the children.

Sometimes acute and difficult problems of behavior arose in certain of the classes and were met inadequately, while in others the problems were met in a way that meant progress. The leader of the chapel service sometimes shared with the entire group stories of such experiences, telling the children the stories as ones which they themselves had been making by the things which they had been doing. She omitted names and ages and in some cases made her own combination of details. She asked the children to see if they could tell from the actions described which of the children were the older. This suggested to them a possible way of measuring moral achievement.

Sometimes the need was felt for definite contacts with people and activities in the larger world around the children. Just before Christmas time, a visitor from one of the charity societies told the children the true stories of several families in great need, how they had come to be in such dire straits, and what the meeting of their needs might mean in encouraging them to go forward into the future with greater courage and confidence.

Again, after the thrill of the children's own enterprises in Christmas philanthropy, the need was felt of introducing the children to the more complex problems emergent in our modern industrial life. It was feared that the children would rest content in a simple solution through patronizing giving.

A miner from Pennsylvania, a leader in the miners' desperate strike for better living conditions, spoke at a chapel service. In broken English he related the story of a real and intimate tragedy. He was hungry for sympathy. The children's overflowing response touched him to the heart. For the children, the experience was akin to that of a religious revival. They had never before been given the chance to see into one of the world's open sores, and their spirits were vivid with concern.

Next came the more intellectual representative of labor, the teacher from Brookwood Labor College, with the story of his father's life and the contrasts between conditions a generation ago and those of today. Later Mr. Spear Knebel's stories and explanations of the problems faced by employers gave the children a growing sense of the difficult issues involved. The story of a paper box factory strike, the story of a study of candy factory conditions, the portrayal of the bold manner in which Russia is attacking the problem of poverty, the picturing of appalling conditions among the poor in China,—these successive presentations Sunday after Sunday kept questions stirring on the part of the children. Each new presentation turned the children about, as it were, to face issues from a new angle and to see a wider view until, after three months of this steady enlarging of vision, a cumulative effect was reached, which the experiences of a life time will scarcely be able to eradicate.

Sometimes the planning for the chapel services and the carrying through of these, was in the hands of the children themselves. Whenever any one class or group of classes achieved something worth while in their own activities, they were encouraged to think of how they might share their thoughts and experiences with the others in the school. For example, the primary Thanksgiving service was planned and carried through by the second- and third-grade classes. One child told the story of the first Thanksgiving. The second grade presented the school with a pencil sharpener which the children had purchased. In preparation, they sent an invitation two weeks ahead to the principal asking her to be ready to make a speech of acceptance, telling her that they wanted her to have plenty of time to prepare a good speech. The third-grade class showed and explained the animals and birds which they had made out of clay.

Later in the year the sixth- and seventh-grade boys gave two original plays. One of these presented a comparison of risks on the part of miners and mine owners; the other gave a comparison of characters, that of a West Side prosperous lad and that of a slum gang leader. Again, Margaret Ann Rusk of the fourth grade read her original story of eight chapters giving the dramatic events in the life history of a miner's family with seventeen children.

These worship services which were so completely the children's own, were distinctly memorable occasions. They brought a stimulating thrill of achievement to those who actually conducted the services and also created the assurance on the part of all the children that the school was primarily their own, and that children's contributions were rated on a par with the contributions of the adults.

Always in some form or other, therefore, each service of worship had in it a challenge, and in this challenge was implied an unanswered question,—something needs to be learned, to be sought for, to be discovered. A new society needs to be created. The way to make the world a friendly place no one as yet clearly sees. The realm of religion and the science of living are fields for adventure and discovery.

> "Oh, that I knew where I might find God!
> That I might come even unto his seat!"

Some of this wistful longing to be able to comprehend God and the meaning of life was expressed again and again in the prayers. Sometimes definite questions were asked in place of the traditional call to prayer at the opening of the service. Is this "Our Father's world"? "Should we always speak the truth?" "How should we meet unfairness when we feel ourselves treated unjustly?" "Are the mine owners as selfish as the miners would have us think they are?" Sometimes a story, real or imagined, quickened thought. Sometimes a real situation as yet unsolved was presented and the children were challenged to find a solution. Sometimes various types of wishes were suggested,—such as the wish symbolized by the Holy Grail or the wish for immortal life, and the children were set to weighing the relative values of wishes. In short, only when the service of worship brought a challenge to the children's thought and feelings did we expect that during the service the children would have what we should call a worship experience.

Finally, what were the actual changes brought about in the thoughts, the feelings and the actions of the children as a result of these chapel services? On this we can give little definite evidence. That the children for the most part were attentive, that they seemed often interested and sometimes deeply challenged, that they frequently discussed the ideas and questions suggested in the services, all these results would indicate that the services probably were accomplishing something worth while in the lives of the children.

Having a keen desire, however, to measure more accurately, if possible, the results accruing from some of the services, Mr. Spear Knebel, one of the teachers of the school, made a careful study of the first eight of the worship services dealing with the problems of poverty in the modern social order. He prepared two tests as nearly alike as possible in essentials, yet different in details, one of which he gave to the children before the series began and the other of which he gave after the eight services had been held. He also sent blanks to be filled out to the parents of the children, asking questions regarding any changes in attitudes toward the poor which the parents had noted in their children. Through these tests, Mr. Knebel was attempting to learn any changes which might have taken place in the children's knowledge of the causes of poverty, and any shifts in attitudes made during the eight weeks from selfishness toward generosity, from indifference toward sympathy, from ignorance toward appreciation, from fear toward friendliness, or vice versa. A number of stimulating suggestions came out of this study which will be reported at length in a later volume on *Experiments in Worship in the Union School of Religion.*

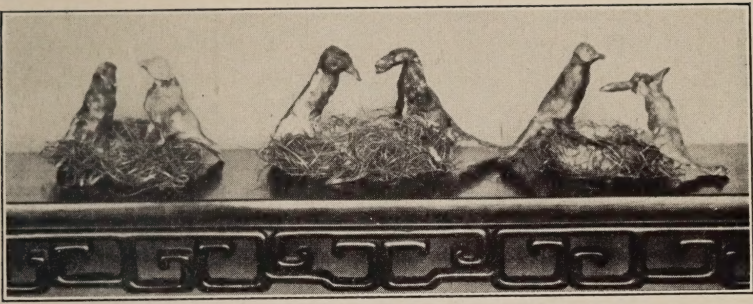
The result of most significance to the present study of the experiences of this third-grade class is that the order in which the classes ranked according to the degree of improvement in attitudes shown through the tests, was as follows:

Grade III	plus 10 points
Grade IV	plus 7.5 points
Grade V	plus 2.5 points
Grade VI and VII girls	minus 1.4 points
Grade VI and VII boys	minus 1.8 points

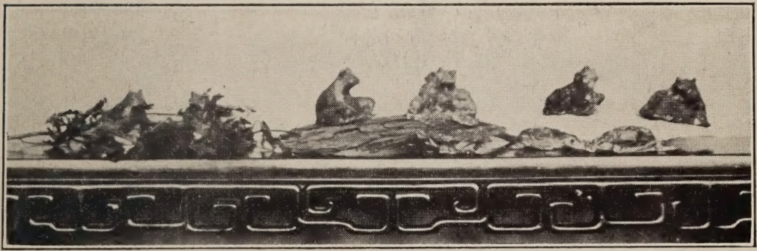
It is interesting to note that Mrs. Sweet's class ranked at the top. Furthermore, among her children there were none who showed a negative score. Of the five classes represented in the test, Mrs. Sweet's class was the most regular in taking time for discussions of the services of worship.

If the classes were to be ranked according to the number and the quality of their discussions of the chapel services, the order would exactly parallel this order given above. This discovery of the dependence of the worship service on the follow-up in the class is a challenge to leaders of worship services for children "not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think." It suggests the arranging of church school programs in such a way that in smaller groups discussions on the thought of the services may be possible. It gives emphasis to the philosophy back of our planning of worship services, namely, that each experience should be a challenge, and stimulate a quest. It should bring an exposure that stirs the desire to go further, to ask more questions, to search. This discovery should waken teachers of small classes to an appreciation of their importance in the total work of the school.

The techniques in the art of leading children in discussion such as are imbedded in these records of Mrs. Sweet's class, for those who have eyes to see, are worth studying. A false move in the leadership of a discussion may create in the child a troublesome prejudice, while in the atmosphere of objective, coöperative, and free expression, seeds of great worth may be growing.



They modelled birds in clay and built nests for them.



They put brown frogs on brown bark, and green frogs on green leaves, and gray frogs on stones.

Chapter III

SIGNS OF GROWTH

If growth in character could be measured as definitely as the growth of a plant, it would be fairly simple to indicate the progress made by the children described in these diaries. We should like to put our fingers on a given spot and say here has been progress, but growth of character is much more elusive than physical growth, and infinitely harder to measure.

We are especially eager, however, to be able to note evidences of moral growth in order to discover whether or not our methods as teachers and parents are effective. In appraising the results of the year's work in this particular class, the teacher based her judgments on her own observations of the children, mostly on Sunday mornings, and on the two written tests given by Mr. Knebel. A more thorough evaluation would include observations in the home and school room and in other spheres of the children's activities; nevertheless, the progress made during the Sunday morning period is of some significance in the child's development. Because to the teacher certain indications of growth appeared along important lines, some of these are culled from the diary for more careful examination.

It will be recalled that the aim throughout the entire year was to help children to achieve moral growth in all the relationships of life, including their relations to God, to the universe, to other human beings and to themselves.

The test of such growth is to be found in the habits and attitudes which the children revealed in their actual conduct, in the attitudes they showed toward themselves, toward others in the group, toward larger social groups and situations, toward the animal world and the material universe, and in the maturing of their thinking on God and on their real philosophies of life.

First of all, what values came out of that part of the program which centered around the original interest of the children, namely, out of their study of nature? On the first Sunday the children revealed a very marked eagerness for nature study as they told about their summer vacations. They desired to continue to share experiences on the following Sunday and a nature-study project soon developed with widening spheres of interest appearing week by week. They became fascinated in seeing the provisions in nature for all life to protect and maintain itself. So they began to wonder how it all started. They began to search for a purpose running through the universe. This inquiry led them into a scientific approach to life which resulted in one child's raising the question as to whether there is a God. Instead of the teacher's answering the question for them by giving them the assurance of a God, she offered to help them in their search to find out for themselves. After two weeks of discussion on the subject, one little girl said, "Well, I don't need to ask whether there is a God any more because I know there is." One of the boys said to her, "Well, I'd like to know how you know, even now?" "Well," she said, "I've thought and thought, and then my mother says there is." The boy replied, "Well, you don't really know yet. That's what we're hunting to find out."

These incidents are a few among many that might be listed as evidences of a continuing open-minded and courageous attitude on the part of most of the children in facing some of the most searching and significant questions of life. Nothing seemed to daunt them, even a problem so profound and so suffused with personal feeling as that of the existence of God.

In this process of open-minded search for an understanding of nature, a second evidence of growth appeared in the children's broadening conception of God as the subject of God was discussed, and experiences were shared. Many of the children had not previously thought much about this problem, but now they grew eager to learn about the origin and development of man's ideas of God. The teacher prepared a series of stories showing this development beginning with the time of the early cavemen. These were based largely upon Lewis Browne's book *This Believing World,* but were told in a manner sufficiently simple and concrete so that the children understood them. The stories gave them a feeling for the growth that is present in every phase of life, not only in the physical world, but in the moral world as well. They began to see that man's ideas of God have changed as he has come to understand more about the world in which he lives. The ideas of God which the children themselves came to hold as they thought on the problem are interspersed throughout the entire diary and form some of the most striking results of the year's work.

One child said, "Science hasn't been able to tell us yet how the first life came to be, but we just call it God back of that. Some day they probably will know. You can't say whether there is a God or not, but you can call whatever started life in the world, God." Another child concluded, "God isn't a person. He's a great energy back of all the world, or a spirit if you want to call it that." Toward the end of the year one of the children said, "I think there surely is a God after all we've studied. We went right back to the beginning just like our chart shows and saw how the world began by flying off the sun. How could that have happened if there hadn't been somebody behind it; and that must be God." "Of course, there is a God," said another, "He is a great spirit that makes everything grow. Think of a tiny seed turning into a tree. There must be something that does those wonderful things."

In the chapel service one day a story had been told about how a cat killed a bird. The question was raised as to which one God really cared for, the cat or the bird. One child said, "I think God loved them just alike because He gave the bird the power to fly, and it was just his hard luck that he didn't fly and so got caught." This is typical of the manner in which these children tried to think through many of life's dilemmas. In that simple statement, the child was expressing a conception of the process of growth throughout the universe. Implicit in his comment is the idea that in the gradual unfolding evolution all living things have developed capacities by which they can get along in the world. But parallel with this growth there is a degree of freedom whereby it becomes possible for a cat to kill a bird. The cat has developed the power to climb and the bird to fly, and each has freedom within his field.

Throughout these discussions the children's faith in God was growing more intelligent, and as their appreciation and understanding of the universe increased their thought of God grew in proportion. Most of the children came to feel that God had given them capacities for managing themselves, and accepted the fact as a challenge. In discussing some of the ways out in time of danger, not one of them mentioned turning to God or praying. One child's comment seemed to sum up their attitude. She said, "I think it's best to use your head, because you've always got it with you." But it is also noteworthy that the children felt the presence of a God at the heart of the process. They had a very deep faith, but one which tended to make them free and adequate to their particular situations rather than one which fostered a dependent attitude based on unreality.

As this study of man's religious development continued the children came to the Hebrew period and spent some months on a study of Abraham and the Hebraic conception of God. In this way the Bible material was used in its chronological setting and was given the same unbiased attention as all the other phases of the work. Here again the children revealed the same open-mindedness and the same spirit of questioning that had marked their approach to other fields of inquiry. The teacher found this significant as a sign of growth because most of these children up to this time probably had never talked as frankly about Bible records as they were accustomed to do with other stories.

Some of the comments on the story of Esau and his birth-right had a very modern flavor. One child's remark was, "Well, I don't think Jacob was to blame for being the way he was for his mother spoiled him from the time he was born, so how could he be expected to be any other way?" This child was looking for cause and effect relationship as naturally as any older student of psychology. Another child continued along the same line, "I know it. It wasn't Esau's fault that he was red and hairy. She shouldn't have judged him just because he wasn't as attractive as Jacob." And still a third voice, "Well, I think it was mostly Rebecca's fault for bringing the children up the way she did. I feel sorriest for Esau, and I think Jacob was the bad one, only it wasn't his fault he was that way, so we can't blame him."

Instead of blaming Esau and Jacob for their conduct, the group sought to discover why the two brothers acted as they did. By noting the various factors in the bringing-up of Jacob and Esau, the children came to realize that there may have been adequate explanations for their behaving as they did, and the children seemed to shrink either from blaming or passing judgment. The spirit in which these children approached life, whether revealed in comments on Bible stories or in observations regarding their own or others' behavior would indicate a measure of growth in moral and social attitudes; at least to one who believes that an understanding spirit is more constructive than one simply of approval or blame. We believe that a person who seeks to understand develops tolerance and appreciation of those who differ, and that such a spirit is necessary if the social situations of our time are to be peacefully reconstructed.

Unlike many church school members, these children displayed a keen interest in the Bible study from the first to the last. Apparently they regarded Abraham as a kindred spirit, despite the four thousand years that separated him from them. In his search for the one true God he had sacrificed a comfortable life in a familiar country. And the children were aware that they were carrying on a similar search in twentieth-century America though following a different method. Although these children were not given a great deal of Biblical material, nevertheless, what they were given left them interested in knowing more.

Throughout the entire study both of nature and of God, the children were finding their own place in the scheme of things; they were coming to a realization that all progress will not be ended with them but that the search will continue with other children in years to come.

An interesting episode during the hand-work illustrates this point. The children decided to make a chart showing the way in which life had developed in the world. When they finished it they were discussing a title. One child suggested that it be called, "A Chart Showing How Life Developed." Another child said, "Well, if we did that, people might think that we think that the world is finished now, and has stopped growing, and we don't think that." So they decided to call it, "How the World Developed Up Until 1928." This gives evidence that the children realized that they were a part of a great on-going process. A spirit of humility growing out of an appreciation of the fact that they were part of a forward-moving group of human beings, was one fine outcome of the year's work.

This chart which the children created to show the upward development of life in the universe made more real and graphic the large idea with which they were struggling, and gave them the opportunity to express their findings in an imaginative way. For instance, when they were filling in the section representing early sea life, Miss Smedley, the handcraft director, suggested that the children draw the early forms of life as they imagined these might have been. Thus the children were permitted an opportunity for their own creative imagination to have play. In addition to making the chart, they did some modelling of animals in clay which were also worthy of exhibit.

Not only in working through some of the philosophical questions and in their study of nature did the children show evidences of growth, but also in their discussions of everyday problems. The range of questions which came up for consideration, and the number of times the children were given experiences in facing real situations thoughtfully, appear in the list of discussions which were carried on during the year, and which appears as Appendix A of this volume.

Through all the discussions, whether these centered around the question of obedience to parents, of settling difficulties with other people, or of working out the best methods of getting along together, the children were developing, through real experiences, skill in thinking on their problems in the light of the knowledge that could be brought to bear on the subject, and in making and executing decisions for themselves.

Improvement in actual conduct was also noticeable. Certain children showed definite signs of progress. For example, take the case of John who was elected president of his class early in the year. When he was leading the group to and from the classroom at the recreation hour, he proved himself at first a rather careless leader. The children discussed his management, pointing out the occasion when he had not been acting as a good leader. John was quick to acknowledge the charges brought against him, saying, "All that they say about me is true. I don't think I had better be president any more." One of the girls, feeling that his attitude was commendable, suggested giving him another chance, and the others agreed. So John consented to try again.

The following week the subject of leadership was discussed in the chapel service and a story was told about a boy who had been elected leader and felt that merely to be "it" was enough. This boy had not realized that there are other qualities necessary to becoming a good leader. In discussing the chapel talk, John volunteered the following statement. "I certainly thought about myself this Sunday morning when she was talking about leaders. I thought it was enough just being elected leader and I wasn't acting like one at all." After this remark the children all said that they noticed how fine John had been that day as a leader. Two weeks later, after the children had returned from a recreation period, one of them mentioned again how well John had led his group across the street that day. Such a change in readiness and ability to carry responsibility would indicate growth of character.

The teacher noted that as the year went on, decisions involving the action of the entire group, required a decreasing amount of time for discussion. The continual practice in thinking things through which the children were having seemed to yield results in developing speed in making decisions. For example, the question came up time and again as to the best method for settling disputes. The problem first arose because of petty quarrels in the class. It came up later in the discussion hour where the problem was raised as to what to do when your brother snatches something from you, and again in the discussions of the coal miners. Later in the year, when the story of "Golden Rule Nash" was being discussed, instead of exploring all the methods that he might have used one child said, "Yes, we've talked about that before and decided it was a pretty good way to do." He was referring to the method and spirit of the Golden Rule. From the beginning the responsibility of group control rested in the hands of the children and the progress they made in learning to work together as a unit seems worthy of mention.

The teacher was also interested to discover how the children linked up their new ideas with differing situations. For instance, they had discussed war on various occasions, and had come to the conclusion that it is a rather futile method of settling difficulties. In their story hour when the life of the early Cretans and Greeks was being discussed, with the tales of their warfare made very vivid, one child said of war, "It's awful. It never settles a thing. It just stirs up more trouble." But he went on to say, "But the Greeks hadn't learned anything better, but we know better today—and yet, look at the Great War!" The child was doing two significant things. He was looking at the situation and seeing the drawbacks of war as a method of settling human difficulties, but at the same time he was viewing the Greeks with a spirit of understanding, not blaming them because he realized they knew no other way. He was, however, holding the present generation responsible for the Great War, evidently feeling that in this generation we do know better.

Another incident from the class record of the twenty-fifth Sunday shows the change in one child's attitude as a result of the year's study. During the hand-work period he viewed with a skeptical eye the chart which the class were making, and commented, "I don't like having New York City at the top that way. New York isn't the whole world, so why should we use it to represent the top scale in evolution?" Another child said, "Well, for pity's sake, John, you were the one who suggested it in the beginning. The way we've done this whole chart is your idea." "I can't help it," said John. "Now that I see it this way it doesn't look right to see New York at the top as though it were the whole world." The teacher settled the difficulty in this case by suggesting that perhaps New York represented man's progress as well as any other place in the world, though it was well to remember John's point that it is only a small part of the entire progress made in the world. Such comments as John's show growth in perspective and are encouraging to the teacher who is ever on the lookout for progress along these lines.

As the teacher looks back on the year's work and notes the progress made by the children in various realms as pointed out, she feels confident that the use of the newer educational methods in conducting the class was tremendously worth while.

Chapter IV

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER

THE children had been playing in the snow for their recreation period. John had been eager to have a snow fight with one of the other boys. Robert volunteered to participate and so they began throwing snow at each other in a spirit of fun. The teacher, looking on, felt that it was a harmless way for the boys to work off some of their energy on a crisp winter morning. But John continued the fight too long. It ended in his taking a huge handful of snow and rubbing it over Robert's face. At this point Robert retreated in tears and John went gleefully away, saying, "Oh, look, Robert is crying."

This is the type of situation which is likely to arise in almost any Sunday school class, for example, in the cloak room before the opening exercises. How is the teacher to handle the situation? Is she to ignore it? Is she to proclaim John the winner and give Robert a feeling of defeat, or is she to condemn John for getting so rough in the frolic and making Robert feel abused? Or is she to assume a more neutral attitude, based on an understanding of the children and of their particular needs? Obviously, the last is the most constructive attitude which she can take in the matter.

An understanding of the two boys gave the teacher a clue to handling the situation. John had the reputation of being somewhat of a bully on the playground. The teacher knew John well enough to realize that there were reasons why he felt the need to fight. The annoying factor in his conduct was that usually he was capable of downing the other boy and naturally, he was not satisfied until he had succeeded. John needed help in being content to carry on a friendly fight where no one was hurt. Robert, on the other hand, was somewhat timid—he was neither so large nor so strong as John. Robert's past experience had given him little desire to tackle other boys, and this fear of defeat had affected his own general estimate of himself. Robert needed to have his confidence built up. The teacher bore these facts in mind when the children were discussing the episode. She wanted to help them both to solve their problems without bringing any blame or condemnation upon either child.

Along with this understanding of children, should go the ability to maintain an impartial, objective attitude toward them. This is the attitude of real friendliness. A teacher of this type does not take personal offense at children's pranks, nor is she annoyed by their misbehavior. She learns to distinguish between her own ambitions and disappointments and those of the children. She realizes that the children in her class are not her property. Ultimately she is not responsible for their conduct. They are free personalities like herself; they belong to themselves and to all of life. Such a teacher maintains the same even attitude of understanding toward all children with whom she deals, showing no preferences and bearing no grudges.

Children are keen to discover the teacher who is really most concerned with her own interests and they begin to pit their interests against hers. They enjoy the sense of power which they feel when they find themselves able to annoy her. On the other hand, when children discover that they have a teacher who remains unruffled, no matter what happens, and learn that she is always seeking their finest development, a spirit of coöperation begins to grow.

A teacher who achieves such a relationship naturally respects children and their opinions. If the children feel that the teacher is treating them as equals they are much more likely to measure up to their best selves than if she talks down to them as a superior authority. She finds in addition that the children reveal their wishes and burdens with a beautiful frankness. If a teacher sets herself up as an example she finds the children holding back what they really think and feel. But if she approaches them in the spirit of one who is anxious with them to discover the best way, she finds the atmosphere becoming quite different.

This is why on the Sixth Sunday when one of the children raised the question as to whether or not there is a God, the teacher turned the question back to the group and asked them what they thought. Many and varied ideas were expressed which led on to quite a search in this field. Had the teacher been accustomed to assert her authority with a positive answer, she would never have known in this case, what the children were really thinking about God. But by taking her place as one with the children, hearing their views, and carrying on the quest with them she was able to discover what each child really felt and thought, and as the weeks went by she was able to help them to grow. This respect for the child is one of the most significant requirements of a good leader.

A few simple and definite techniques are imbedded in these diaries which it may be helpful to summarize.

First of all, whenever a disciplinary problem arose within the group, the teacher usually considered it important enough to stop everything and discuss it. Such occasions she looked upon as real life situations in which character was in the making. She could not afford to overlook these which were her opportunities. A useful device for launching into such a discussion, she found, was to say to the children, "We seem to be having a little difficulty in the class. Shall we stop a few minutes and talk it over?" The children usually granted that this was a wise thing to do, and then the teacher could turn especially to those children who seemed to be the source of the trouble. "What about this?" was one phrase which proved very useful. An illustration of its use appears in the class diary for the Seventeenth Sunday where two boys were having a water fight in the washroom after the hand-work period. The teacher appeared in the midst of it and merely said to the boys, "What about this?" They explained to her that they had been fooling and she continued with another very useful phrase, "What had we better do about this?" A more prolonged discussion of the incident took place after their return to the classroom, but the illustration is cited particularly to show the type of phrase which the teacher found useful in such situations to start the children thinking about their problems. Such questions conveyed no tone of condemnation nor any hint of pending punishment, but merely gave the children an opportunity consciously to take the responsibility for their conduct and to consider it in the light of its consequences. The larger the number of questions which were turned back to the children for settlement, the larger the number of opportunities the children had for developing a resourcefulness in themselves for meeting new and changing situations in the future.

After the teacher heard all that the children had to say about an incident, it was her privilege to add any points which the children did not mention. If there were certain consequences in a course of action which occurred to her as important it was her privilege as a member of the group to present them. She was careful to speak in that capacity and not as one having any greater authority. By the use of questions very often it was possible for her to get such additional data from the children without having to mention them herself. Such questions as these were useful:—"What were all the things that happened as a result of the way we left our classroom today?", or "What are some of the things that might happen if we did this?"

Also, it was the teacher's function to help the children to withhold a final decision about a problem until the various causes and consequences had been explored, in other words, encourage them to be as thorough as practicable in their consideration of an issue. She used such comments as the following in this connection: "Let us think a little more about this before we decide what is the best thing to do." Because of the leader's wider experience in most of the situations of life, she could often add to the considerations which the children had presented. She did this in their study of nature, and also in leading them into a study of how men's ideas of God have changed. Where it was a case of adding actual scientific facts to a discussion, the teacher, of course, spoke with some degree of authority. The children also had the same privilege of adding facts they had learned. The teacher aimed to help them to evaluate scientific data at their real worth.

She also found that it was encouraging to the children to bring up episodes where they had handled themselves worthily and to comment upon these. If their undesirable behavior alone had been mentioned they might have become discouraged or might have felt that only through their undesirable conduct were they able to attract attention and to produce a basis for lively discussion. Good behavior should attract, at least, as much attention and be as thrilling as the other variety. An instance of this appears in the class diary for the Twenty-first Sunday, when a boy spilled all the shells belonging to another boy. The owner took the accident in fine spirit and set to work collecting the shells. On this occasion the teacher asked the children if they had noticed the fine spirit in which Robert had taken this mishap. One way of opening up a discussion when things have gone particularly well might be to say, "Why did we have such a good time this morning?"

Where the discussion centered around a more philosophical subject or some social question, such as those following the chapel services, certain expressions proved particularly useful in stimulating the children to think and in encouraging them to express their personal opinions. The teacher often opened up the discussion by asking the children such questions as: "How did you enjoy the chapel service this morning?" or "What part did you like best?" or "What did you think of that story?" This type of question was neutral enough in tone to lead to a discussion of the service at the point where the chief interest lay. Almost always some child would say, "I liked the story." Then the leader would continue to help the child to express himself by asking, "Why did you like the story?" In an atmosphere of friendliness, children talk very readily. Other questions used were, "I wonder why this was?" "What do the others think?" "How did that make you feel?"

On other occasions, the children asked the teacher questions. Many of these they could profitably think through for themselves. On such occasions, she replied, "Try to think why this was." With a little urging the children were often capable of finding a solution of the problem. An instance of this method of handling a discussion appeared in the class one day after the teacher had read them a story about early life on earth in which the early forms of life were described, including some that are now extinct. One child said, "Well, how does anyone know those big animals ever did exist if they are all dead now?" The teacher said, "Try to think what ways we might have of knowing?" One of the other children said, "Well, people have told about it ever since and then they put it in books." A third child said, "Yes, and people go out and dig up their bones, that's how we know. There was an expedition that went way up in Mongolia and found the bones and eggs of dinosaurs. I saw movies of it." In this way the child's question was answered by the group without a word from the teacher except the phrase, "Try to think."

Again the teacher bore in mind the value of relating the larger social and historical problems which were being discussed to the lives of the children as far as possible in order to give meaning and reality to the new situation. If the group had discussed the lives of other people or animals in an abstract, academic, detached way it is doubtful whether any great benefit would have been derived from the study.

Again, by way of illustration, one morning the subject of "power" had been brought up in the chapel service by the son of a miner who told of bad conditions among the miners due to the wrong use of power on the part of the mine owners. Following the service, the children discussed the issue. Leading on from this discussion of the mining situation the teacher asked the children if they thought the world can ever get along without people in control. They all agreed that it cannot. She went on to ask them if they thought their class could operate successfully without leaders. One child said, "Mercy, no. Remember the time we had when we didn't have any?" Thus a problem of the use of power which at first was one of relationships between mine owners and miners, the teacher led the children to see was a problem of their own, but in another guise. This ability to see in life experiences somewhat akin to our own problems makes possible the difference between a dead class and one alive with activity. It is one way of helping children to see life as a "whole" rather than as a series of detached incidents, indeed, a way of making life religious.

Another opportunity which often presented itself to the teacher was that of helping children to face themselves and their motives honestly. A few illustrations from the class records will give an idea of how this was achieved. On one occasion during the play period, a boy had been teasing one of the girls and she had been quick to strike back. She had, however, obviously invited the teasing and the teacher felt from observing the situation that one was as much at fault as the other. Finally, the girl approached the teacher and said, "What kind of a man do you think Robert will make if he does these things as a little boy?" The teacher said it was hard to tell but she wondered if the little girl had thought what kind of a woman she would make if she hit Robert back every time he teased her when she was young. The child took this with an understanding smile and the trouble ceased.

On another occasion the children had been playing hide-and-seek at their recreation period. Philip was "it." He didn't seem very skillful at catching anyone and finally when John, the class president, came in ahead of him, he just sighed and said, "John makes a bum president." The teacher asked him why he thought so, and he said, "Oh, he just is." She went on to say, "Do you suppose the fact that John got in ahead of you just now might be one reason why you said that about him?" Philip said, "I suppose so. I'm not very good at games." The teacher tried to point out the fact that this fact had nothing to do with John's qualifications as president.

These incidents illustrate ways in which a teacher may help children to see through themselves instead of shifting blame where it does not belong. She tried to do this in a kindly way, often with a twinkle in her eye, because this saved the child from a sense of hurt. She often felt it unnecessary to drive the child to an admission of his mistake, for that might have been expecting too much of him. She realized that everyone has need at times to "save his face" in order to save his self-respect. The teacher can easily tell by the look in a child's eye whether he has admitted his mistake to himself and this is all that is necessary. The humiliation of open confession might possibly be disastrous to the child's self-esteem.

By way of summary, the following are the main suggestions of this chapter:

1. Gain an understanding of children.
2. Maintain an objective attitude toward children.
3. Treat children as equals, respecting their viewpoints at all times.
4. Employ phrases such as the following in conducting discussion:

   "What about this?"
   "What had we better do about that?"
   "Let's stop and talk this over a few minutes."
   "What happened because we did this?"

"What are all the things that might happen if we should do this?"
"I wonder why this was."
"What do the others think?"
"Try to think why this was."
"What part of the chapel service did you like best?"
"How did you enjoy the chapel service?"
"How did that make you feel?"
"What would you do if that happened?"

5. In a discussion add any consequences or data which the children may not have thought of, but do this as a member of the group and not as a superior authority.

6. Help children to withhold final judgment in a situation until all the consequences and facts have been explored and considered.

7. Comment on especially commendable behavior and have children consider why it is good.

8. Relate, if possible, all experiences shared through books, stories and direct contacts to the everyday life of children.

9. Help children to face themselves honestly.

Chapter V

HELPING CHILDREN TO FIND THEMSELVES

WHEN Philip first came to the class he spent a good deal of his time whispering, making foolish comments, drumming on the table, or asking to go out for a drink. When a serious piece of work was going on he was quite apt to become sidetracked in spinning some fantastic tale about it. For instance, when the children were modelling frogs in clay and coloring them to show nature's method of protecting animals, Philip was busy putting a small clay crown on the head of his frog, and announcing that it was the king of the frogs. When the star-fish were in the process of making, his comment was that they all looked like scrambled eggs. With this type of comment he was sure to get a laugh from the rest of the children and for the moment he became the center of attention.

In themselves these devices of Philip's for attracting attention were not particularly annoying, but from the view-point of Philip's development they were worthy of the teacher's consideration. It so happened that Philip had an excellent mind; in fact he had one of the highest intelligence quotients in the group. It seemed a pity to the teacher that he could not be gaining attention on a more constructive and worthy basis, especially when it was apparent that with his high degree of intelligence he must have valuable contributions to make to the group. Here was an opportunity for the teacher to help Philip gain the attention he sought but on a more mature level.

A similar opportunity awaited her in the case of each child in the group, although each presented a problem peculiarly his own. A certain fundamental understanding of children was quite essential if the teacher was to meet her opportunity in the most effective way.

Children are not the little rational creatures that they were once supposed to be, into whose heads all sorts of moral ideas can be poured with a direct effect upon character and conduct. Instead, they are "feeling" creatures, with impulses and desires playing a far more important part in the directing of their behavior than their seemingly rational ideas are doing. Their unsatisfied emotional needs impel them, without their being conscious of what is driving them on. Their behavior cannot be understood until their real needs and satisfactions are known.

Psychiatrists tell us that every child has two major needs; namely, the need to be loved and cared for, and the need to be recognized and taken notice of as a personality. These two basal needs may be regarded as the root sources of all behavior. When either of these fundamental natural desires is being thwarted, symptoms of difficulty tend to appear in conduct. For example, if we discover belligerency in a child it is well to realize that he does not fight for the mere sake of fighting, but that there is some underlying cause for this enmity. Perhaps he is not receiving sufficient love from his parents and is taking it out on the world. Perhaps he is dominated by an older brother or sister or father and, feeling his personality being crushed at home, he is trying to get even by fighting society. Where such a situation exists, the method for changing the attitude of belligerency to one which is more socially acceptable is to discover the basic cause and to remove it, rather than to give the boy moral talks on the sin of fighting.

Again, the tendency to be cowardly or timid is just as indicative of some underlying difficulty as that of belligerency. There is some reason for lack of courage in a child, and a talk on David's courage in killing Goliath would probably be the least effective method that can be used to develop courage. Perhaps the child has never been encouraged to achieve anything worth while and his inadequacy has tended to make him lose heart. Perhaps he has been criticized too much and lacks the courage to tackle hard things, or perhaps he has always leaned on his mother and has no resources within himself for facing life. His real worth as a personality has been unrecognized either by himself or by others.

When we consider all such possibilities, the process of character education becomes a very complex affair. We can no longer limit our religious education merely to the telling of Bible stories or to the pointing out of morals. Each child's problem becomes unique and our task as teachers is to develop a program which will take into consideration all these variant emotional factors.

In trying to see below the surface of a child's conduct and to gain insight into the motives lying back of it, the teacher of this group found clues constantly coming to her through the opinions which the children expressed in discussions. Thus, on an occasion when the children were discussing various methods of dealing with someone who had acted unfairly, Robert's advice was to "sock him one and let it go at that." It came out in the course of this discussion that fighting was one thing that Robert himself seldom had the courage to do. Fearing defeat, he was quite apt to run to cover when he was attacked. Further investigation into Robert's case revealed a degree of timidity in meeting many situations in life where children of his own mental age were involved.

All of this was easy to understand after the teacher had gained a more complete picture of Robert from his parents and club leaders. He was a child with a very high intelligence quotient who had been promoted in school until he found himself with children who were all much older than he was. While he was their equal mentally he felt inferior when he was with them in play. He was unable to keep up with them when competition in physical strength was involved. Very naturally this sense of being smaller caused him to retreat when older boys approached him for tussles. Understanding all this, the teacher saw why Robert took the viewpoint that "socking them one" was the best way to settle a dispute. It was what he very much wished he could do, and it was what he had been encouraged by his parents to do. In fact, he needed more than anything else to prove to himself that he was the equal of his playmates. Through his achievements in the mental field he was making up for his weakness in the physical life. Understanding Robert's real difficulty, the teacher saw her opportunity during the year to help him to build up self-confidence in social situations.

Another boy who challenged the teacher to special thought was James. When discussions of war or fighting were on James came out strongly for the pacifist viewpoint. On one occasion he became quite eloquent on the subject, saying, "I think that fighting is always wrong. How can you ever have a perfect society if people fight? And if we fight when we are boys we'll fight when we are men. I think it is awful to fight." In this case one of the other members of the class had his own ideas of why

James did not like to fight. "Sure, you think that because you are a sissy and are afraid to fight, so you say it isn't right. In your club you always hang on to the leader's arm. He's always telling you to let go of him. You're just a baby." The teacher, realizing that everyone feels like fighting sometimes, asked James if he had never had that feeling. With this James began to talk with much emotion. He said, "You bet I do. Many is the time I could just murder somebody until he died. I'd like to fight and fight, but I'm always scared I'll get licked." The teacher went on to explain to the children that James' viewpoint about fighting might be the very best one but it was well for James to understand why he took the position he did. She realized that the kind of pacifism that is built up on fear is not particularly wholesome. It would be far better to get at the root of James' motives and then, understanding his feelings, to help him to form a more rational opinion on the subject. A teacher thus has countless opportunities of helping the children to see through their real motives if only she herself has the insight.

From the illustrations that have been cited it becomes apparent that, if a teacher is to do her most effective work, each child in the group must become for her a personality to be studied with care and discrimination. Unless she understands the child's home background, unless she appreciates the forces which have warped or encouraged his inner ambitions, unless she really knows why he acts as he does, she is as "a blind leader of the blind."

Information about the home-background of every child in a class is needed, including his relationships to his parents, to his brothers and sisters, the attitudes of school teachers and playmates toward him, and any other information which tends to give insight into the behavior of the child. In approaching children from this angle, teachers discover that children who might otherwise be irritating almost beyond endurance appear as handicapped personalities needing help and freedom to grow.

The degree of thoroughness with which any Sunday school teacher is able to work in this field is dependent in part upon her winning the coöperation of the parents. In some cases, the authors found that parents were very helpful, but in other instances they found that the parents at once reacted in defense of their children rather than by giving or seeking light on the inherent difficulties. In our work with parents, we must be content to work slowly, trying to win the parents' confidence, by helping them to see that we are eager to work with them for the best interests of the child. Very often the parents of a child do not hold the same viewpoint in regard to methods of dealing with children. Moreover, beliefs and practices that have ruled for years are not usually changed in a day. For instance, the parents of two of the children of this class felt that the teacher should exert more authority over the children and not let them settle so many problems for themselves. These parents were disturbed over the conduct of their children in the group and criticized the teacher for not having better discipline.

One mother came to visit the class in the midst of a serious discussion of science and religion. Her child was one of the leaders in the discussion and became so interested that he rose to his feet and shook his small fists in the air. At the close of the hour the parent lingered to make this remark to the teacher, "I do wish you would teach the children politeness at this school." Outward appearances were her chief concern because she had not yet achieved sufficient insight to realize how significant were the inner stirrings that made both child and teacher quite oblivious of mere manners. The blindness of parents to what is really happening is a challenge to the teacher who sees. Coöperation between teacher and parents grows as understanding and confidence in each other is developed.

Where the parents do coöperate it is often possible to secure so complete a picture of the child that it is of inestimable value to the teacher in her understanding of him and gives her a much greater opportunity to help in his growth. This was particularly true in the case of Philip who has often been mentioned. His parents recognized certain of his difficulties and were eager to share these with the teacher in order that she might do what she could to help in overcoming them. Because of their understanding of the purpose of this book and their eagerness to help other parents, they have permitted us to give more fully the details of his experience.

Philip was born in a foreign country where his parents were engaged in missionary work. His mother died at the time of his birth and when he was still an infant he was brought to the United States and put into the hands of his mother's parents. Since he was the only child in the household, his grandparents lavished upon him a great deal of love. They were inclined to be indulgent in meeting his desires and he soon discovered that crying or flying into a tantrum would bring him anything he wanted. Instead of being left to walk and run about as children ordinarily are, he was wheeled around in a go-cart until he was nearly four. During these early years of his life, little had been done to help Philip grow into an independent, socially acceptable child. He had been given careful physical care, had received plenty of affection, but not of the type that tended to make him independent, and he had been allowed few contacts with other children.

When Philip reached the age of five, his father remarried and the child left his grandparents to return to the foreign country with his father and new mother. Since during all these years he had scarcely seen his father, the situation in which he found himself at five years of age was totally new and different from anything he had ever experienced. His new parents were very modern in their treatment of him and he soon discovered that the "patterns" which he had used with his grandparents were of no avail with this father and mother. Not only did he have to accustom himself to parents with strange methods of dealing with him, and to new friends, but also he had to adapt himself to a new country. His parents did not at first realize how significant this change would be in the boy's life, and how difficult his problem was. By the time the family reached their home in the interior of this foreign land, Philip became very ill with a complete nervous breakdown. It was months before he was able to be out of bed. It was a case of complete mental exhaustion. The new elements in his life were more than he could cope with. The parents were very wise during this entire period, and they very slowly helped Philip to come back to life on a new level. His mother said she felt that his very high degree of intelligence was the only thing that saved him. His parents gradually appealed to his reason on more of the issues of everyday life, until he was able to begin readjusting his life on a different plane.

When he had recovered, the mother began teaching him. There were no schools in the city where they lived and few children of his age from the West. He had never been to school in his life until he came to New York at the age of seven. His playmates were few during those years abroad so that he had rarely played with children of his own age. He had been with his parents the larger part of the time. When he began life in New York, he found no trouble in making his adjustment to school in the intellectual field, but socially and emotionally he was finding difficulty. In these realms his development had been retarded because of the early years when his grandparents had kept him a baby beyond a normal period, and because his contacts with other children had been so limited. His mother said: "Philip really has two or three years of the kindergarten stage to live through in his social development before he will be like other boys of his age."

One can readily see the significance of this data for the teacher's understanding of Philip. It is little wonder that whispering and drumming on the table and making silly comments about the work were easy patterns for Philip to fall into. As one studies the class diaries with more care it is interesting to trace Philip's development in the social and emotional realms. Philip's difficulties in adjustment were during the play periods. When he was "it" and found the game hard to play he was quite likely to retreat unless the teacher encouraged him. On one occasion early in the year Philip with one of the girls was leading the group to chapel. He was very silly most of the time and did not conduct himself as one would expect a leader to do.

When the class returned to their room the incident was brought up for discussion. The teacher asked the group what they thought of the way the leading had been done. One child said, "It wasn't very good. The leaders rushed out of the elevator before the younger classes did and made an awful noise." The little girl who had been leading with Philip said, "Well, I don't ever want to have Philip for a partner again. He acted so silly and tried to say I was the Queen of France." Philip said, "I know I didn't lead any good, and I don't ever want to lead again." The teacher realized that in situations of this sort Philip was quite likely to retreat rather than to face up to the situation and try to do his best. Understanding his past history and the little contact which he had had with other children in assuming definite responsibilities, the teacher could easily see why he reacted in this way to criticism. The teacher led the discussion on to a more impersonal basis, hoping that Philip would ponder on the situation. She asked the children what might be expected of leaders. They discussed this for a time, one child making the point that we might expect them to be dependable. Philip was quiet through all this but finally said of his own accord, "Well, I'll lead once more and show you if you want me to." The teacher asked the children if they didn't think this attitude on Philip's part was much better than his first one and they all agreed that it was. During this episode Philip was growing and during the course of the year the teacher felt that he made much progress. She was careful to give him encouragement whenever the occasion warranted.

The most significant thing in this study, however, was the unusual coöperation of the parents. They were eager to share with the teacher the data that would aid in her understanding of the boy. In this particular class Philip was less of a problem than were a number of the others, but his story is cited more fully because it illustrates what help can come when the parents do coöperate. Many of them feel, however, that any admission of difficulties in their children reflects upon them in some way and they find it hard to accept the facts. Parents of another type who can see their children impersonally are of the greatest help. If the teacher can lead a mother or father to feel that information is sought not in any spirit of criticism, but only as a way of understanding the child, they will be more willing to share their problems.

In conclusion, a warning might be offered to the teacher not to become too deeply involved in cases which are obviously too difficult for her to handle. Many times it will be realized that a child needs more expert attention in the field of emotional adjustment than the teacher has the knowledge or the skill to give. When such cases present themselves advice should be sought from specialists rather than an attempt made to do too much with inadequate resources. Whereas the Sunday school teacher has a real function to fulfill in the realm of personality adjustment, it must be remembered that there are limitations and that one cannot aspire to do as thorough work in this sphere as one might like to do. It is, perhaps, for the apparently more normal children that one can often do the most effective work, because these do not usually present conflicts as difficult of settlement as do some of the more unadjusted children. There is always room for improvement in the conduct of even the normal child.

Appendix A

CLASS DISCUSSIONS

As recorded in these diary records. The numerals indicate the Sunday when the discussion occurred.

I. *Discussions of personal and group problems of behavior.*
- Whispering during class conversation, 1.
- Ways of learning, 1, 16, 17.
- Behavior at home in presence of company, 2.
- Methods of leadership, 2, 5, 6, 8, 15, 18.
- The use of force when one is in power, 3, 17, 18.
- The crossing of the street as a class, 3, 7.
- Class responsibility vs. group responsibility for a damaged eraser, 3.
- Should a child have to come to Sunday school simply because his mother said he must come?, 4.
- Is self-control desirable?, 4.
- Tardiness in arriving at Sunday school, 4, 6, 8.
- The meaning of a democratic class, 4.
- Should the prepared share their treasure with the unprepared?, 4.
- The calling of another a "liar," 5.
- Should each one be responsible for himself?, 6.
- What should you do when you fail?, 6.
- A mother's criticism of the children's wriggling, 7.
- What should you do when someone snatches something from you?, 8.
- Whom to help at Christmas?, 9, 10.
- Should the class postpone their class project to celebrate Christmas?, 10.

Making plans for Christmas, 10.
Are we born bad or good or are we responsible for what we are?, 11.
Teasing and how to meet it, 11, 18, 27, 31.
Methods of protection (for animals and for children), 3, 13.
Intentions regarding life work when grown-up, 15, 18.
Fighting, 8, 19, 20, 25.
The causes and remedies of class confusion, 13.
Ways of settling quarrels, 8, 14, 17, 18, 21.
"Peeking" in playing hide-and-seek, 14.
"Private fun" vs. group fun in midst of a game, 14.
How to take an inconvenience caused by the thoughtlessness of others, 22.
The Golden Rule method as a way of meeting situations, 22.
Our wishes, 22.
What to name the chart, 26.
Plans for the final worship service, 30.
Class responsibility for a pulley broken by one member, 30.
How to spend class money, 30.

II. *Discussions of social problems pertaining to the larger world.*
What should be done when boys carelessly damage an auto that does not belong to them?, 2.
Military schools and war, 3, 18, 22.
How long has man been discovering things?, 3.
When people are incurably ill and are suffering, why not kill them?, 5.
What does Thanksgiving mean?, 6.
What are the things that make people happy?, 6.
What about the feelings of whites toward Negroes?, 6.
The use of power, 15, 17, 18.
The use of charms and fetishes, 10.
Problems of mine owners and miners, 16, 18.

Strikes, 15.
War as a way of settling quarrels, 18, 22.
The basis for determination of wages, 20.
Relations between rich and poor, adults and children, in Russia, 24.
The poor in China and how to help them, 27.
What should be done with babies for whom parents are unable to provide food?, 27.
What are the causes of floods?, 27.
What is wrong with conditions in candy factories?, 28.
What is a tariff?, 28.
Family relations between Rebecca, Jacob and Esau, 31.
Conditions in mines compared to slavery, 18.

III. *Discussions of philosophical and religious problems.*

What God only can make and what men can make, 2, 7.
What to tell a child who wanted to write a letter to God, 2.
When will everything be discovered?, 3, 30.
Is there any God?, 6, 7, 30.
Is God back of all life and for how much is He responsible?, 7, 13.
Do we need to be afraid of God?, 13.
The theory of evolution, 15, 18.
Is there a purpose back of life?, 15.
Where did the first life come from?, 18.
Is the Adam and Eve story true?, 3, 7, 15, 18.
Is Jesus living now?, 4, 25.
The Bible or science, which?, 25, 26.
Who was Jesus?, 25.
Did Jesus rise from the dead?, 25.
Does God protect and help people?, 25, 30.
Does God talk to people?, 29.
Did God ever wish people to sacrifice to him?, 29.
What of Jesus' idea of God?, 31.
Do we live after death?, 26.

Appendix B

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